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NEVERFAIL:

—OR—

THE CHILDREN OF THE BORDER.

A Tale of Kentucky.

BY DR. J. H. ROBINSON.

CHAPTER I.

THE BORDERER.

In the latter part of May, 1777, near the close of a pleasant day, a man well mounted pursued his way along the banks of the Ohio, toward Kentucky. He reined up his horse and dismounted, impelled to do so by fresh footsteps upon the ground, which he proceeded to examine critically. He was soon satisfied that several horses had recently passed that way. Leading his animal by the bridle, he continued to follow this well defined trail. His interest was much increased, after walking the distance of half a mile, by the discovery of a foot print so small that it could have been made by a female, only. Retrograding a few paces he found the spot where she had obviously dismounted from a horse; and going on a hundred rods further, he came to a fallen tree where she had as clearly remounted; for the impress of the petite feet ceased at that spot. A little beyond, influenced by signs intelligible to the adept in woodcraft, he stopped and examined the ground more particularly than in the first instance. It was the trail of Indian feet that now drew his attention, and which, coming upon the white trail at a right angle, had changed its course and followed the latter. Having assured himself of this fact, he looked to the priming of his rifle and pistols, adjusted the knife in his belt, and went on with more wariness.

He had learned three things by his skill in the indices before him. That a party of whites had preceded him; that one of the party, at least, was a female; that an Indian—there might be one or more—had found their trail and was undoubtedly pursuing it with hostile intentions.

It being near night, the white emigrants—emigrants they must unquestionably be, from one of the border States—would soon, in the nature of things, encamp and wait for another day to resume their precarious wanderings through the wilderness, which, unless the travellers were wary, would give a savage ample opportunity to work them mischief, either by his own arm, or by bringing others of his tribe upon them in the hours of darkness, so favorable to native warfare. This conviction had the effect to quicken the steps of the woodsman, in order to avert, if practicable, the catastrophe.

It was not long before the freshness of the trail inclined him to leave his horse and go forward with more cautiousness than could possibly be observed while the heavy animal kept pace at his heels. Reaching, anon, a bend in the river, and looking across it, he perceived the party of whites making preparations to encamp; that is, he saw some horses just hobbled and turned loose upon the banks of the stream to regale as best they might upon the tender grass and herbage, and two or three men constructing a temporary shelter for themselves and baggage.

With not a little eagerness the woodsman cast his eyes about to catch a glimpse of a female form; but his curiosity was not gratified. He followed the curve of the noble stream, not forgetting the circumstance that had excited his suspicions. When he had made two-thirds the distance of the bend, he discovered an object that possessed for him more than ordinary interest—a young woman seated upon a mossy knoll, with an air of innocent abandon, at once graceful and engaging. Her features were embrowned somewhat by the sun; but it did not render them less lovely, or detract from the pleasure the borderer experienced in contemplating them from the copse where he stood concealed.

The sun, still lingering brilliantly upon the distant hills, threw his parting rays full upon the maiden's face, and the woodsman saw her visage (for the first time) bathed in the glorious light of a gorgeous sunset. A heart more obdurate than his might have confessed a little weakness with such a fair preeminent in view; stronger eyes might have been dazzled a trifle, and a far more irascible person might have owned to being pleased with the beauty of the fair stranger, without the fear of being thought wanting in taste.

There was something indescribably sweet in her expression, which the woodsman believed he had never seen in the countenance of woman. Her figure, too, as she reclined at ease upon the knoll, was seen to be wondrously symmetrical, with just enough embonpoint to perfect its attractiveness. The admiring woodsman was of the opinion that any alteration in her person, however slight, would certainly be for the worse; so it is evident that she filled, to repletion, his idea of female loveliness. Nor could the most phlegmatic woman-reducer have seen her at that moment without sharing, to some extent, the enthusiasm of the woodman. The toilet of those days was not so costly and elaborate as the goddess of fashion now imperiously insists upon; but the dark-eyed pioneer girls of the century gone were by no means deficient in taste. They understood well the art of personal neatness of attire—how to make the most of a little, and to fashion what they had into garments comfortable and becoming. Be sure that they knew how to appear to the best advantage, and in what the strength of beauty consisted. We cannot describe with any degree of accuracy the young woman's apparel; but it will be enough for our purpose to affirm that it became her person quite as well as more elegant fabrics do not a few of the belles of the present period. Indeed, any dress, however coarse its materials, adapted to her figure so as to show its rounded outlines, could not be otherwise than comely to the eye, although in this regard there was nothing to regret, the fair emigre being clad in richer and finer stuff that was usually worn on the border.

The woodsman observed that she wore the prettiest little moccasons imaginable, beautifully wrought with beads and quills; and that the ankle above it was shapely; while the hand upon which her head rested with unstudied grace, was delicately small and scrupulously gloved. He was not near enough to define particularly the color of her eyes and hair; but made up his mind that the first were a dark and bewitching blue, and the latter, a wavy and coquettish auburn.

It is difficult to tell how long the borderer would have remained in the copse gazing at this scenic creature, had not his attention been called to another party who was approaching her unconscious and deftly. This party was a native warrior, with a carbine in his left hand, and a knife and tomahawk in his belt. He was within ten yards of the maiden, and advancing upon her. She saw him at the moment that the inadvertent breaking of a twig betrayed his nearness, and sprang to her feet at once with a slight scream. The woodsman was about to fire, but the person of the young lady was now between him and his mark, and he silently lowered his rifle. The two—the native and the maiden—were face to face; the former, with his right hand raised warningly, and the latter with her figure thrown forward a little, her left arm elevated and thrust out obedient to the first impulse of fear; while for an instant her respiration seemed suspended. She stood fixed and statue like. The red man made a menacing motion toward his hatchet and pointed to the woods; which pantomime signified that she was to go with him, and that resistance would be death.

She hesitated, uncertain whether to cry out and attempt to fly, or remain passive. It soon appeared that she had decided upon the latter course; for she assumed a dignified attitude, and, strangely enough to the borderer, banished that terror which had kept her dumb and pale. She was about to speak when a sibilant sound from the red man checked her intent.

"Let the white girl keep her tongue still if she would live!" he said, springing lithely to her side. "If she makes a noise, this," he placed a red finger upon his knife, "will silence her."

"Do the Chickasaws go on the war path to surprise women!" retorted the maiden, in a low voice. "Is this the way great warriors get fame and a name to be terrible among the tribes!"

"I am Eagle-plume, the chief of the Chickasaw nation. I have come to conduct you to my lodge. Our way is yonder beyond the fires of the pale robbers who have built their wigwams on the banks of the Kain tuck kee. Come! Walk! The trail is long, the sun is going behind the hills, and the voice of the owl will soon be heard!"

"Let the trail be long and the lodges distant! Let the sun go behind the hills, and the owl scream his notes to the night, I will not walk the woods with Eagle-plume!"

The maiden spoke loftily and firmly, without apparent fear. The savage chieftain smiled scornfully.

"*Hooh!*"—an exclamation of contempt. "And so the blood of the white squaw is up. But her strength is feeble, and Eagle-plume will bear her away like a feather."

"Begone, woman-fighter! Look! my people are there. One shrill cry will bring them upon you."

"*Nushka!*"—a sharp exclamation to call attention to something of importance,—"You are the light of my eyes. I come not to shed your blood; but I swear by the great Manito of the Chickasaws that if you cry out, be your cry no louder than the wail of a wounded dove, I will send you to the heaven of the pale face!"

Eagle plume laid his hand upon the maiden's arm with an expression of countenance too stern and deadly in its import to be mistaken.

"I am not of your race. Nature itself has placed an impassible barrier between us. There is eternal enmity between the red man and the white; and it will remain till one of them be swept from the face of the earth. You are not of my blood. Oil and water will not mingle. Note it well: it is a lesson you can understand. I dislike your name and nation. I shall never kindle a fire upon the stones of your distant lodge. There is nothing so impossible as that death would be sweet in comparison. I know you and your deeds. You are the cruellest of the cruel, the most implacable of the implacable. I have dwelt in the wigwam of one who has seen you in battle, seen the gleaming of your hatchet in the bloody midnight marauding, and heard your terrible shout in the moment of fiendish victory. You are fearful to my sight. Go, and leave me, or strike me down where I stand. To kill is your trade. Come, brave warrior!—add to the fame of your deeds by the murder of a helpless maiden!"

"The mysterious God of the pale face has made you fair. He has gifted you with a dangerous beauty; but he has put the venom of a serpent under your tongue. *Nushka!* If you make not the fire upon the hearth-stones of the chief of the Chickasaws, you will kindle no fires in lodge or wigwam. You will dwell with Eagle-plume, or you dwell not among the races of men."

Eagle plume threw an arm adroitly about the maiden's waist, while he placed the hand of the other upon her lips. To raise her with his untamed strength and hold her secure and quiet, was the work of a moment.

The borderer watched this scene with intense interest, ready to save her from any harm that might threaten, and it seemed now time that he should interpose. Running nimbly from his covert, he laid a strong hand upon the Chickasaw's shoulder, arrested his steps, and turned him toward him by a movement of his muscular arm. The expression of surprise that first appeared upon the visage of Eagle-plume quickly yielded to flashing anger when he perceived who confronted him. More quickly than may well be imagined, he plucked his knife from its sheath and made a desperate effort to bury its blade in the bosom of the maiden; but the hunter was too well versed in the knowledge of Indian character not to have anticipated such an attempt. He caught the suspended hand by the wrist, and holding it poised aloft in the act of striking, met the fierce and terrible eyes of the noted warrior unshrinkingly, and returned him glance for glance. There was a nation's hatred in those deep set and fiery orbs, when, turning upon the borderer, he strove to look him through, and look him dead; but he had encountered one, it seemed, of no ordinary mould—the lightnings of his eye were powerless to strike terror to his heart.

Eagle-plume suffered the knife to fall from his unnerved fingers to the ground, retaining with his other hand a firm hold on the now trembling girl; but seeing that he was unequally matched while thus encumbered, he plashed her from him, and springing at his adversary like a panther, the two became engaged in a frightful struggle for the mastery.

Though at liberty, the maiden had not power to fly from the spot. She saw their athletic bodies meet in a gigantic effort to crush each other. She saw their arms interlaced, and the muscles rising and swelling in a fearful test of their potency. She saw a series of rapid motions, a whirling and scattering of leaves, a sudden and continuous changing of place, and presently a fall to the ground, where the combat assumed new intensity. Anon all this ceased, and the hunter arose panting, wiped his knife and returned it to its sheath.

The maiden cast a terrified look at the last scene of the conflict, and saw the form of Eagle-plume, lying still, and stained with crimson spots.

"Thanks, brave stranger!" she said, turning from the spectacle faint and giddy. "You have risked a life-struggle with the boldest and most powerful of the Chickasaws. It is little short of miraculous if you have escaped without dangerous wounds."

"I believe, young woman, that I am unharmed—though the strength and dexterity of the savage was wondrous," replied the woodsman, with a courtesy of manner not to have been expected from one clad in the plain garb of the backwoodsman.

The maiden had been missed, and at this juncture a man came hurrying to the spot where the parties were standing.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAMP.

THE person who appeared was rather past the prime of life, but yet hale, bearing upon his features and physique generally, the prestige of many good years. There was not, perhaps, so much of the hunter in his garb as is sometimes seen in the wilderness; but still enough to show an acquaintance with woodcraft and the necessities and demands of the times. He was of manly height and carried himself erect and with dignity. His face might be called stern in expression. Indeed, his brow was somewhat deeply set with furrows, produced either by much care or settled melancholy, or a long indulged habit of frowning; although, for courtesy's gentle sake, we will not believe in the latter. He was quick, firm and energetic in movement, being, clearly, one accustomed to decide without hesitation and execute a purpose without faltering. Like the borderer, he was armed with a rifle, and the handle of a hunting knife protruded conveniently from its leathern sheath.

"Judith!" he cried, in a raised and anxious voice, as he approached; "Judith!"

"I am here, and safe," the young woman answered, making what haste she might to meet him.

"What has happened, my dear? You are very pale, and tremble like a frightened doe," he added, casting at the same time a suspicious look at the woodsman, who was leaning against a sturdy oak, relaxing his overstrained nerves.

The latter saw her commence speaking with the man—who was obviously her father, or some near relative—in low yet animated tones, recounting briefly, doubtless, the startling events of the last ten minutes. Her communication had the effect to change his manner and dispel that shade of misgiving that momentarily added to the natural sternness of his countenance. He had stepped during this hurried narration, but now came forward with alacrity and saluted the borderer.

"My daughter, sir, has been telling me what has occurred. First, let me ask if you are wounded? There will be time enough, I dare say, for thanks when we have broken bread together; for I trust you will not refuse our humble shelter and humbler fare for the night."

This salutation—not so much the salutation as the manner of it—assured the woodsman at once that he was beginning an acquaintance with a man of no ordinary stamp; one who came without circumlocution to practical matters, and seasoned his speech with common sense.

"My bodily powers, it is true, have been severely taxed, but save a flesh wound or two, that are scarcely worth noticing, I believe I may answer that I am little worse for the unexpected encounter. To be sure there was considerable muscle in yonder fellow—more than I have met for many a day; but he lies there quiet enough, now—as quiet as if the power of a giant was never his."

The borderer replied with as much composure as if nothing remarkable had transpired.

"Truly, he is as passive as the brother clod upon which he rests. Are you certain that you have dealt with him effectually?"

"I care not to strike twice; it is repugnant to my feelings to strike once. There is, sir, something sacred about human life, however low in the scale that life may be. One is apt to reflect, too, that this mysterious spark that animates us, when once dismissed, either by natural decay or the conflict of untamed passions, can never be called back to resume its connection with the corporeal form. As inconsistent as it may seem to you, sir, I would willingly recall this red child of the forest back to that robust life which he inherited but a few moments ago."

"That state of feeling I conceive to be the legitimate outgrowth of a meditative and philosophic mind," returned the other, gravely, but with sufficient warmth to witness to his sincerity.

"The air here does not agree with your daughter, I think," said the woodsman, observing that Judith clung closely to her father's arm, and studiously looked from the object which had formed the subject of remark.

"You are right. We will go, if you please, to our encampment—if you will allow me to bestow such a term on such a flimsy and unskilful affair."

"I left my friend and companion—my horse—some half a mile hence. I will return for him and join you as soon as practicable."

"You will be spared that trouble, I imagine. That must be your animal that stands just in the edge of the copse there, with ears erect and inquiring. He has sagaciously followed his master's trail."

"Yes, that is my good beast, and I am not sorry that he has followed."

The woodsman whistled, and the horse, with a pleased neigh of recognition, came on like a dog, seeming glad of human companionship again.

"You will not expect from me and mine, sir forester," said the elder of the two men, "that courtesy and gentle keeping that was in vogue among the knights errant of the olden time. We are, as you see, simple wayfarers, seeking an abiding place in a new country where danger is imminent, and vicissitude an expected visitant. That we may be more at our ease, and make what progress we can toward good fellowship, I will inform you at once that my name is Waitron. I am from South Carolina, on my way to the hunter's paradise—the Kain-tuck kee of the Cherokee. A disastrous change of fortune, combined with a natural love for the life of a pioneer, has induced me to this adventurous step. All of wife or child that remains to me is comprised in this girl, who is by no means averse to this flight across the border to the land of flowers, and forests, and forays; though I could wish that she had been content to stay behind until I had laid the foundation of a home, and the Indian troubles were amicably settled. A few hardy adventurers have borne me company, and whom you will know, I doubt not, in good time. My own immediate household consists of my daughter, a maiden lady of eccentric habits, and a poor, unbefriended lad, whom we consider it our duty to befriend and care for."

"In return for your frankness, I will say that I am called Lockwood—Theodore Lockwood—a name not so distinguished as yours, but one I trust that is not disgraced by any act of mine. If I am not mistaken, you are the same who was governor of a neighboring State. Surely, fortune is changeable. I could find it in my heart to regret the kind of life you have chosen. A powerful residence within the area of the 'dark and bloody ground' cannot be expected. It is unquestionably known to you that Indians are in arms harassing the footsteps of the white settlers, allowing them few hours of quiet rest. They lurk upon the banks of rivers to cut off unwary boatmen; they lie in ambush in forests and near the stockades of our countrymen; they have even had the boldness to attack the forts at

Boonesborough, and their deeds are such as fill the heart with horror and sorrow."

"Accounts of this nature have reached my ears; but I have hoped and still do, that this state of things will not long continue. Here we are at our camp; it is a flimsy affair, but I dare say you have fared worse, if you are the arrant man of the woods I take you to be."

"I have passed many nights in the open air, the great arch of the sky being my only roof. My sleep, under such circumstances, has sometimes been sweet, too, environed, as I was, by dangers, with the chorus of the wolf for my lullaby."

Lockwood followed Waldron into the camp, which was of considerable size, with a fire in the centre—after the Indian style—over which some women were cooking supper.

Judith's adventure was soon told, whereupon some of the men took their rifles and ran to the spot indicated, to see the body of the famed Chickasaw chief. They returned soon with the intelligence that no such body could be found, though they had discovered blood upon the leaves.

"His wound, then," said Lockwood, calmly, "was not mortal. Probably we left him in a swoon; or, possibly, he simulated death, with the deep cunning of his race."

"Perhaps," said Waldron, "it would be well to pursue him. Wounded as he is, his flight must necessarily be slow."

A tall man in a buckskin hunting-shirt, who had just come in and was standing by the fire, holding a long rifle by the barrel, while the breech rested upon the ground, turned toward Waldron and replied to his suggestion in a low, moderate voice:

"You might follow him, but that would be all. You can foller anything—your shadder, if you feel like it,—but follerin' and overtakin' is two things, as you'll find if you try it. I examined the ground thereabouts. He went straight as an arrer for the lodges of the Chickasaws. His trail was as light as the step of a dainty-goin' gal in velvet slippers; and as for blood, there was none to be seen on the leaves. Perhaps our new friend has a prejudice agin killin' Ingins, thinkin' they are sort of human-like."

There was enough of sarcasm in the concluding period to be perceptible but not offensive to Lockwood.

"In self-defence I am not influenced by motives that can justly be considered very philanthropic. I strike an enemy for the preservation of life, without stopping to philosophize, taking it for granted that the right to preserve my life is bestowed upon me by the God of nature. That Indians have strong claims to relationship to humanity, I am, without question, inclined to believe," Lockwood answered, glancing furtively at the spot where Judith stood receiving the congratulations of the women.

"I deem myself not a little favored," said Waldron, "in having the privilege of making you acquainted, Mr. Lockwood, with the prince of foresters and the master of woodcraft. You may or may not have heard the name of Never-fail, connected with tales of the border. If not, you must indeed have sojourned in a distant region. If you have, then you will need to know only that he is before you."

"The name of Never-fail is not new to my ears," returned Lockwood. "I have heard it associated with stirring stories of adventure in the forest of Kentucky. I am happy to meet one whose fame has been earned by courage and sagacity."

"I take all praise kindly that is well meant," replied Never fail; "but I might as well tell you at once that I aint over fond of fine sayins' and pretty speeches. Smoothness of the tongue is French and Ingin all over; and I can't say that I like anythin' that's French and Ingin. I'm called Never-fail, and I don't greatly object to it. It got fixed on me, by one means and another, some years ago, because people was good enough to imagine that I was death with the rifle, and sure on the trail. Well, perhaps I've a knack of doin' these things with tolerable certainty, but I'm by no means parfict, stranger; but there may be sich in the world, though it hasn't been my lot to meet 'em, more's the pity."

"Verily, we don't look for perfection in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," drawled an individual in a long-waisted, long-skirted and seedy black coat, buttoned close up to the chin. This person was favored with a face somewhat elongated by nature, and by a serious cast of mind which forbade him to join in the common, innocent pleasantries of life, causing him to draw back into himself like a turtle into its shell. His face was smooth and solemn, and no one could remember having seen its gravity relaxed by a cheerful smile; his hair, which was long and of a flaxen hue, was parted from his forehead to the crown with precision, and combed down straight upon each side, adding materially to the rather ludicrous sombreness of his expression. He spoke with moderation, and generally in an unnecessarily raised voice, rising upon his toes when excited, and letting himself back upon his heels again; while at the same time he rubbed his hands together, as one is wont when his digits are cold; or else kept them clasped upon his diaphragm in a very impressive manner. When eartest above the ordinary level of his feelings, he lapsed into a nasal twanging quite awful.

Being considered a simple-minded, well-meaning man, Obed Slingsby was usually allowed to have his own way and say, and he had slipped along through the world, thus far, as a personage of no slight importance, destined to exercise a saving influence on the moral and religious worlds. Obed was as prone to Scripture quotations as Sancho Panza to proverbs; though, unfortunately, he was an inveterate perverter of the true and lawful rendering of Bible texts. His quotations were rarely correctly given, which sometimes detracted from the dignity of his subject and produced merriment where he was expecting tears. Nor were his citations always apposite. It often happened that he produced a passage from the venerable book that was as applicable to the "man in the moon" as to the theme of remark; although there were times when he was tolerably happy in argument, illustration and reproof.

"Truly, my friend," added Obed, "it savors of earthly vanity to talk of perfection when the heart of man doeth evil, and that continually. And as for the red Philistines that come against the Lord's anointed with the tomahawk and the spear, they will pass from hence like smoke, and their days will not be long in the land. They will be driven out before us and scattered as chaff at the winnowing."

Slingsby put the points of his fingers together, twirled his thumbs and elevated his chin.

"Are you ready to risk your body in the work of scatterin' 'em?" inquired Never-fail, with a curl of the nether lip, indicative of contempt.

"My vocation is not to wield the weapon of human warfare; but verily I will lift up my voice mightily in your behalf while you go forth to smite the heathen hip and thigh. In this way I shall do more for our cause than an army with banners. It is written, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth.'"

"That kind of warfare, I fear," said Waldron, "may not prove so available in this region as more active practice. If such are your principles, it would be safer, it seems to me, for you to remain at home on the quiet side of the border. I believe our cause and purpose require the use of carnal weapons, as you are pleased to call them. However, every man has a right to the free and unmolested enjoyment of his opinions, although consistency sometimes demands that one's conduct should be in a degree conformable to his avowed faith."

"In all battles with the red heathen," returned Obed, meekly, "it is meet that one or more remain behind—in some safe place—to pray, while others go forward to smite with the sword. In this manner, friend Waldron, will the pagans be cast out before us, and we shall possess the goodly land. Yea, and truly!"

Lockwood being little interested in the peculiar views of Obed Slingsby, found opportunity to consider Judith attentively, while listening, apparently, to his remarks. It was now dark without the camp, but within there was a large fire that sent up a bright and leaping blaze—the light from which enabled him to see her very distinctly, and to observe her without seeming effort. His first impressions of her were deepened. Her person, seen by the ruddy blaze, was no less graceful in outline than when seen by the flashing rays of the setting sun; while her features—pale though they were—had lost nothing of their loveliness. Her eyes—he had met their beaming gaze since entering the camp—reminded him of the soft and distant stars, beneath which he had often slept in the glades of the forest, with no roof above him but the wide dome of the sky. Her voice was melodious and low—and a low, sweet voice in woman is a goodly thing. She had the liquid, flowing enunciation that he had noticed in Indian girls, and which he thought particularly charming. She had those gliding movements, too, peculiar to the red maidens of the forest. She seemed to move without effort, and with a noiseless footfall. Her age—he began to query about that—he conceived to be between sixteen and seventeen. In truth, she now appeared to him much younger than when he saw her upon the knoll in the open air. He concluded before Obed had finished his last remark, that if Judith was as sensible as beautiful, Waldron was truly blessed in his daughter. There was pleasure in looking at her and following her graceful movements with his eyes—which, on this occasion, were unusually observant. At first he was disposed to check this propensity to stare—he mentally pronounced it staring—at a young girl who would probably be annoyed at so much watchfulness in a stranger; but, finally, by a small exercise of philosophy, persuaded himself that it was quite proper to admire her as he did other beautiful objects in nature—a fine flower or an attractive landscape. This theory came very conveniently and served his purpose excellently well; it was plausible, too.

One reflection in connection with this girl Judith, caused him anxiety; which was the danger that would hourly attend her sojourn in the forests of Kentucky. He resolved to embrace the first opportunity to speak with Waldron on the subject. Indeed, he considered it his duty to warn him of the deadly peril before him, and to which he was inclined to suspect, he was to some extent a stranger. A favorable moment soon presented, of which he was not slow to take advantage.

"I should be wanting in friendliness," he commenced, addressing Waldron, "if I did not speak plainly of the peril of this enterprise. When I look at your fair daughter, I am filled with the direst apprehensions for her safety. Surrounded as you will be at all times by prowling savages thirsting for the blood of white men, whom they view in the light of aggressors and trespassers, it can scarcely be expected that all of your small party will reach the banks of Kentucky River in safety. Or should you arrive there without loss, I must frankly tell you, as one who knows this country well, that the danger will be infinitely greater than ever."

Judith drew near while Lockwood was thus speaking, and listened with interest.

"The best advice I can give you," resumed the latter, earnestly, "is, turn back upon your trail, and for your daughter's sake be content with a life of quietude the other side of the border."

"I should be churlish," answered Waldron, after a moment of silence, "not to appreciate your friendly motives. Judith shall reply to your kindly admonitions."

Judith averted her eyes modestly at this announcement; but presently looking at Lockwood, timidly said:

"It seems to you, doubtless, that my father is wantonly and needlessly exposing me to danger by this journey to the wilds of Kentucky; a country known thus early in its history as the dark and bloody ground. Let me assure you, sir, that I have acted from choice—not from necessity. It would be impossible to tell you what a charm the forest has for me; nor am I confident that you would not attribute it to girlish folly and inexperience should I make the endeavor. I am not wholly unacquainted with border life. I have, too, some knowledge of Indian warfare and Indian character. You are inclined to smile at this assertion; but, brave forester, years are not always needful to bring this kind of wisdom. It may be acquired by a few months or years of vicissitude. This, you may think, has little to do with our present purpose, yet it may serve to assure you that I have not undertaken this pilgrimage without a tolerable idea of the perils that attend it daily and nightly and hourly." She paused, and then added, with a smile: "Besides, sir, you should give me as much credit for courage as you accord to those good women who are busied with preparing supper. They brave all these dangers, and why should not I?"

Lockwood breathed more freely; for the few words she had said assured him that she was sensible, and rather more practical than he had been led to expect.

"I may not be able," he replied, not without embarrassment, "to argue the case with you, Miss Waldron, but confident am I that the hardship and vicissitude of an enterprise like this taxes the bodily powers of sturdy hunters and the iron-nerved veterans of many battles. Seeing you here, so young, and evidently so little acquainted with toil, makes me regret your determination, and fear for your safety."

"I trust I shall appreciate the motives that have prompted your words of warning; yet I shall be the last to ask my father to retrace the weary miles we have trodden," answered Judith, her eyes sinking beneath the steadfast gaze of the borderer, who found such fascination in her face and voice that he could fix his attention upon no other object while she was speaking.

"Is it really true, Miss Waldron, that you can find pleasure in this wilderness, in the very lap of danger?" he inquired, with earnestness.

"I love nature at her wildest," resumed Judith. "What is more impressive than the silence of a mighty wilderness! Yet the quietude of the forest is not voiceless; it speaks to me in tongueless eloquence, and I know and understand it well. I have a soul for woods and streams, for mountains and valleys. I shall be content with a cabin on the banks of the Kain-tuck-kee. As for the Indians, I will make friends of them. Ah! you smile again at my simplicity."

"You see," observed Waldron, gravely, "that my daughter has acted entirely from choice, and I am free to confess against the dictates of my better judgment. Should she say to me to-night, or to-morrow, or the day following, 'Let us turn back,' I would do so."

Lockwood did not feel inclined to urge the matter farther, and the announcement that supper was prepared, naturally served to divert the conversation to other subjects, concerning directly or indirectly the existing troubles of the times.

CHAPTER III.

THE WINDING WAY.

The night being fine, Lockwood wrapped his blanket about him and laid down near the camp, deeming it his duty to be where he should be one of the first to know of the approach of danger. He could not but reflect on the events of the evening—the discovery of Judith and the terrible conflict that followed. It gave him peculiar satisfaction to know that he had been instrumental in saving her from captivity and whatever evils—light they would not have been—it might have brought. His mind was particularly exercised with this theme. For a time he could see nothing but the peerless form of Judith before his inner sight.

This pleasant vagary was no less vivid in sleep, haunting him in numberless phases—beautiful in all. Starting from his dreams anon, with the idea, which was very prominent in his thoughts when he stretched himself upon his couch of boughs, that he ought to be watchful, he perceived the motionless figure of Never-fail, sitting at the roots of a tree, with his head slightly bowed and his rifle lying across his knees. As he contemplated this fixed and silent object, he could not but recall the marvellous tales he had heard of him. He had been a wanderer in the woods from boyhood. The love of forests was born in him. Danger and adventure made up the sum of his life and pleasure. He heard music in the running of rivers, the fluttering of leaves, the sighing of winds through the branches, the footfall of the deer, the bellowing of the buffalo, the cry of the panther, and the howl of the wakeful wolf. He roamed fearlessly over the "Dark and Bloody Ground;" he slept where night found him, with earth beneath and the broad sky above. He was quick to trail a foe, and fertile in expedients of escape. The name of Never-fail was known to the Chickasaws, the Cherokees and the Mismis. More than once had he been a captive; but he was adroit at outwitting his enemies. Thus far he had defied scalping-knife and fire. There seemed to be a charm upon his life, which Indian cunning could not break. With the rifle, it was said, he never failed; and from this fact, doubtless, he derived the name that had attached to him for many years, and was likely to follow him during the term of his existence. His unerring rifle he had characteristically named "Sure-death," and habitually referred to it by that significant title—but too appropriate, perhaps, and too well-earned. On account of his power of eluding pursuit, he was called "Night-walker" by some of the Indian tribes—an appellation not without meaning when applied to one so restless, so cautious in movement, and so swift in change of place.

Lockwood arose and approached Neverfail, whose vigilant ears were open to the faintest sound.

"You must by this time feel the need of rest," he said, upon reaching the spot where the forester was sitting.

"I'm not parfict"—this phrase was always among the standing matter of his brain, "but I'm never sleepy where there's a duty to be done. I can keep my eyes on the alert night after night when I'm on dangerous ground—when the trail of the red heathen has crossed my track, and the enemy is up and stirrin'. I have kept sleepless vigil in Powell's Valley and in Walden's Range. I have camped in the gap of the Cumberland when the varmints were on the scent. I have hunted on the Big Sandy when the Chickasaws were out, and the ground softened by recent rain. I have kindled my fire at Beargrass when the smoke of the wigwams of the Cherokees was on the other bank of the Ohio. I don't say this in a boastin' way, but because I've been thinkin' it over, wonderin' what my life has been spared for when so many have gone under—under the turf, you know—in these tryin' times. Well, my turn'll come by-and-by, I day say—it must, in the course of nature."

Never-fail raised himself a little and looked meditatively at the moon. Desirous to know the opinion of such a veteran of the woods concerning the prospects of Waldron, Lockwood approached the point directly.

"The governor," resumed Never-fail, "is a man of courage and experience; but between you and I, stranger, there'll be nothin' partic'larly wrong in sayin' that it's rather a bold push, considerin' he has that young gal with him that don't look as if she could stan' the wear and tear of such a life. If women must go into the wilderness, let us have stout and hardy ones that don't mind gettin' tired, and who can use a rifle or an axe when it comes to the worst; and in course we must expect the worst sometime or another in an adventure like this, when you can't tell what a day or an hour may bring forth. However, this isn't no concern of mine. Every man—and woman, too—has a right to do as he or she pleases. I fell in with them in Powell's Valley, and as I was comin' this way for purposes of my own, I undertook to guide them to the settlements on the Kentucky to the best of my ability. As for the young woman, she's rather too handsome and delicate, I take it, for the woods. But we're now on us parfict."

"She is indeed wonderfully gifted in personal beauty. But I must not forget my purpose. Go and sleep, my friend, I will take your place," returned Lockwood.

"The offer is a friendly one, and I wont refuse it. Neither will I charge ye to be watchful, for there's somethin' in your eye that 'sures me you'll keep your senses about ye. You know, probably, that the red heathen are full of mischief, and not a soul of us 'll reach the Kentucky if they can help it. An' while I think on't I might as well say that I'm sorry you didn't strike deeper when you had the advantage of that crafty red-skin. But that's past—and there's none of us parfict."

"Lie down and slumber quietly. You shall have due warning if there is cause of alarm. I believe I am no novice in this kind of life."

The parties exchanged places, and in a short time Never-fail was, apparently, slumbering profoundly. It was now near midnight. The tree within the shadow of whose branches Lockwood was standing, was about twenty yards from the camp, directly in front of it, while the forest was at his left, considerably nearer. The horses were at the right, some forty paces distant, in a grassy glade.

Lockwood had not been at his self-imposed duty more than half an hour, when he saw a female figure in the door of the camp, which, to his perception, was no other than Judith Waldron. She stood there a moment, casting furtive and prying glances toward the spot where she manifestly supposed Never-fail or some one was posted, and then flitted away—her quick, light and noiseless movements being more like flitting than walking.

Lockwood was nearly overpowered with surprise, and remained at his post staring after her like one bereft of the power of motion. As her form disappearing in the forest, an explanation of this strange conduct—as he was forced to suppose—flashed through his mind: Judith was undoubtedly a sleep-walker, and this one of the vagaries of a somnambulist. He felt sure he had hit upon the solution of the mystery, and was equally satisfied that it was his duty to follow and protect her from whatever danger might be lurking in the vicinity. He was pursuaded that there should be no hesitancy under circumstances so singular, and immediately moved after the figure, though it was no longer fully visible and he could now obtain but occasional glimpses of it through the intervals between the trees among which she rapidly glided. He found it was no easy matter to follow and keep her in view, without producing sufficient noise to attract her attention; but fortunately she did not go far before she stopped and threw anxious, and he thought, expectant glances into the forest.

While Lockwood was observing her attentively and wondering what could be the result of this nocturnal wandering, he saw with increased astonishment a figure step from behind a patriarchal tree and advance to Judith. What was still more surprising to the borderer, this second party was a native, tall as Saul, straight as an arrow, and wearing the badges of a chief of distinction. Although his acquaintance with Judith was of the briefest duration, this singular meeting gave him much pain. That it was preconcerted was too evident to admit a question. Upon that point queries were entirely needless—the proof being before him. Was this a love affair? was the first definite interrogative that presented itself, and though it was one in which—he mentally confessed—he had no particular interest, it by some means assumed an aspect of great importance. Before forming an opinion, he reflected that it would be well to be patient and draw his final inferences from what might ensue.

The distance was such that he could not hear what manner of salutation followed, or what was subsequently said. They conversed—that was apparent—coyly on her part, at first; but with animation presently.

The Indian—the borderer knew him to be a Cherokee by certain distinguishing marks quite obvious to his experienced eyes—was stately and dignified in bearing, speaking but little at the opening of the interview, but growing earnest as it proceeded, until his herculean figure seemed agitated with some controlling emotion. Once he saw Judith lay her hand upon his arm and incline her face toward him, as if making some moving appeal, stirring announcement or important declaration. Lockwood fancied that there was an air of tenderness in this movement, and it exercised a depressing influence upon him. Soon after the Cherokee walked away a little distance, and turning again to Judith, stood motionless as a statue. She waved her hand toward him and began to retrace her steps to the camp. Perceiving her intention, the borderer hastily concealed himself, and she passed within a few yards of his hiding-place, while the Indian remained looking after her as long as her form could be seen from the spot where he stood, and even after she was screened from his sight by the intervening trees and foliage, when hurrying into the dark recesses of the forest, he was soon lost to Lockwood's view, who returned slowly and thoughtfully to the post he had deserted.

Never-fail was lying where he had left him, with every appearance of being in a refreshing slumber, from which no slight disturbance would arouse him.

The borderer was glad of this, for he hoped—he scarcely knew why—that the knowledge of this incident might be kept from him. Possibly he feared, providing he had witnessed her going and coming, that he would think less charitably of her than she deserved, or than the circumstances would justify. So much had he been impressed in her favor, that he desired the gentlest construction put upon her conduct, and as deeply as he was mystified, and as much as he was at fault, words of condemnation from a third party would have vexed and annoyed, notwithstanding he might have felt their justice and pertinency.

At an early hour in the morning the camp was astir, and by the time the sun was visible above the tops of the trees, the pioneers were on their way to the land of their hopes—Never-fail conspicuous among them, sometimes in advance, looking for the most practicable route, noting every trail, and sometimes in the rear, giving instructions and encouraging the women and children.

Lockwood soon managed to join company with Judith, the incidents of yesterday giving him a right—it must be supposed—to claim this privilege. He had resolved—by a series of adroitly proposed questions that might seem to have no relevancy to his real purpose—to obtain, if possible, a glimmering of light relative to a subject that so perplexed, and, in spite of all he might feel inclined to say to the contrary, troubled him; but when he met those eyes so penetrating and beaming, his fixed intent underwent a sensible diminution. In her presence, it seemed impossible to doubt her. With that beautiful face turned toward him—which appeared to express intense purity of thought and integrity of purpose—he found it exceedingly difficult to form such interrogatories as he had thought practicable while the spell of her personal presence was not upon him.

Could it be that Judith was enamored of a savage, and gave him tender love meetings by night? He would not harbor such a supposition. He would rather tax his mind for ingenious excuses for the nocturnal interview he had witnessed. Certainly, that would be more magnanimous and worthy of one who had an exalted opinion of the sex.

Some conversation ensued respecting the perilous passage with the Chickasaw. Judith taking advantage of the opportunity to express the sense of obligation she felt and would continue to feel; to which the borderer replied with well-timed and courteous gallantry that became him well, and did not lower him in the estimation of the maiden. He proceeded to speak of the agitated state of the times, the cruelties of the red man, and by an easy gradation to the natural scenery of the country. This led to observations concerning the climate, when the borderer remarked, that he considered it as fine as any in the world, the night, in certain seasons of the year, being so agreeable as to tempt one to walk abroad rather than lie down to dreams. He congratulated himself on this happy allusion, and watched his fair companion while making it. There was a slight suffusion of her cheeks, and a furtive glance at the speaker, which proved that his ingenuity had not been entirely without effect.

She recovered her composure quickly and returned a fitting response; but after that he felt certain there was a troubled expression upon her face, which did not wholly disappear during the day.

Mr. Waldron presently rode to the borderer's side and engaged him in conversation. The theme was what the circumstances most readily suggested. Among other things Lockwood said that he was on his way to a small encampment of the Cherokees, where he was to meet a notable chief, for the purpose and with the hope of arranging a treaty of peace with that warlike nation.

Waldron shook his head dubiously.

"You think my mission will prove a failure?" added Lockwood, noticing his doubting expression.

"I have fears relative to its success, and for your safety, also. I know from the best authority that they intend to retain possession of their hunting grounds as long as they are able to count a score of warriors. They are a determined people, led by a chief of great ability. The fame of Alabamon is unquestionably familiar to one who has so often crossed the border."

"As a leader of great sagacity and courage he is certainly known to me. I have never, to my knowledge, met him, although it was said that he headed a war-party with which I once had a desperate encounter. My present business is with Alabamon, and I am not without hopes of success," Lockwood rejoined.

The mention of Alabamon at once excited an interest in Judith, a circumstance that did not escape the attention of the borderer.

"It would, it seems to me," she remarked, "be extremely perilous to trust yourself in an encampment of the Cherokees, unless you have received the most positive assurances from Alabamon that you shall be received and treated as he comes a deputed agent of a recognized power."

"I have not received the assurances of which

you speak," Lockwood replied, "but one recently a prisoner among that people has made communications, which, if reliable, amount in substance to a promise of good treatment to any authorized agent who shall appear with proposals of a peaceful nature."

"I am sure you are too prudent to place much confidence in the asseverations of a stranger," resumed Judith, with some warmth and not without timidity.

"Prudence is prone to degenerate into selfishness; and is, in many cases, but a negative virtue. I am willing to incur risk for the sake of those helpless families upon the border who are now exposed to savage excursions, and are daily and nightly the victims of harassing fears. What is one life, in comparison to the many that are imperilled and must fall before the close of this war? I will take my life in my hand and seek the presence of this proud and irate savage, Alamon. If I fall, my death will be avenged by the hardy pioneers, who will soon convert these vast hunting grounds of the Indian into cultivated fields and goodly gardens."

Judith paused a moment, as if to reflect on what Lockwood had said, and then asked, with perceptible emotion:

"You think the red man will be dispossessed of his pleasant lands, and driven towards the setting sun?"

"So it seems written in the book of fate," replied the borderer.

"Verily the nations of the red heathen shall be scattered," quoth Obed Slingsby, who had ridden near enough to the parties to hear the latter part of the conversation. "They will flee before us even as the leaves are whirled by a mighty wind. They will be smitten with the point of the spear, and with the edge of the sword, and with the deadly bullet. Yea, verily!"

Slingsby tipped himself upon his toes in the stirrups, and added, in a canting whine intended to be notably impressive:

"Yes and truly!"

The effect of this prophecy was to make Judith smile, and cause Lockwood to consider the speaker more critically than he had yet done.

"Do you think it right, in a moral and religious point of view, thus to drive out the rightful owners of the soil?" Judith inquired, with something of mischief lurking in her eyes.

"The idolators of old were cut down root and branch, and cast out of the land, that the chosen people might inherit it; even so at this day shall the arm of the heathen be broken and their strength brought low. And it shall come to pass that we shall go up and possess the goodly land. Yes, and truly!" responded Obed with growing enthusiasm.

"It does not appear perfectly clear to me that you have cited a parallel case," returned Judith.

"Which cometh of the natural man that cannot discern the things of darkness from the things of light. If time permitted, and your inclination so prompted, I would abundantly prove to you by the writings of Lodovic Muggleton (of whose faith I am) that it is right, and not only right, but meritorious, to destroy the heathen and such of the pagan nations as run after vanities. Yea, verily!"

"I know but little of the Muggletonians, but if such be their principles, I like them not," added Judith.

"That is because of the invisible enemy that dwelleth in you, which is the prince of darkness that worketh wonderfully in the children of men, being incarnated in them, the more effectually to pull down the true kingdom and bring into discredit the doctrines of the pious Lodovic. Ah—ah!"

Having thus delivered his sentiments, Slingsby considerately fell back to the rear, when Judith referred again to the subject which his coming had interrupted, saying that if he still adhered to his purpose of visiting Alabamon, she would venture to recommend that he should not go alone, but take with him an experienced woodsman, to which Lockwood made answer, that he had already thought of doing so, and now that she had so advised he would give it more serious consideration.

"I have," he added, "thought of securing the services of Never-fail, when he shall have fulfilled his present engagement."

"A most wise and prudent selection," said Mr. Waldron, "and I doubt not that he will readily incline to the adventure, which savors enough of danger to fascinate his imagination."

A tall female—of a particularly thin conformation, mounted upon a bony and angular beast, and attended by a youth upon a stout, steady-paced nag—who had been riding in advance, checked her horse to allow those in the rear to come within speaking distance. This was no other than Philena Foote, the maiden lady spoken of by Mr. Waldron in his first conversation with Lockwood; and the lad who kept near her was the half-witted boy also mentioned at that time.

Philena had manifestly turned the second corner of maidenhood, and stood an eligible candidate for single-blessedness for the term of her natural life. Her face sympathized largely in that thin, sharp contour which has been noticed, presenting mountain length and a clearly perceptible deficiency of breadth. As seen on horseback, her person gave assurance of great altitude when viewed upon the natural supports of the human body. Her eyes were gray and not wanting in prying restlessness of movement. Her skin was somewhat sallow—from age or illness, it must be inferred—while not a few pretty well defined wrinkles could be seen about her forehead and mouth, which she no doubt would have disdelled had it been in her power.

Philena still considered herself young and the possessor of attractions of no mean order which she was willing to display whenever opportunity offered. She was, withal, an indefatigable talker. The most antiquated of her acquaintances could not distinctly remember an instance when she had forgone a chance to exercise her vocal member, and it was now really believed that such a circumstance had never been.

From Miss Foote we turn a moment to the unfortunate youth at her side, and whom, it would appear, nature had cheated of some of those faculties generally accorded to the human family. His personal development was like that of others of his years, there being no deformity or visible imperfection in structure. There was, to be sure, a vacancy of facial expression, indicative that the mental part of the boy was not at home, and an awkwardness of movement quite observable, but when at rest and silent, he passed very well among those acknowledged to be more highly gifted. When he attempted to converse, there was a palpable want of coherency of thought, his sentences frequently bearing no recognizable relation to each other, although in his disjointed mind, obviously they appeared connected and to the point. His utterance was slow, having the characteristic drawl of his unhappy class.

He was also addicted to the repetition of phrases and words, employing them under circumstances when they were most irrelevant, inapplicable, and out of place, not unfrequently with ludicrous effect. His crippled understanding was supposed to have been in some manner induced by the influence of terror upon the mother, in consequence of a nocturnal Indian visit, and the attending incidents of a desperate defence and loss of life. This assumption received strong confirmation in the fact that his mind—like a kaleidoscope—reflected fragmentary, fantastic images of Indians, with the various implements and accessories of cruelty which at that period justly attached to them. At seasons, his imagination teemed with these pictured objects of horror, as could be seen from his pale, agitated and changed manner of speaking; for it was noticeable at such times, that his usually laggard speech was quickened into a continuous and hurried flow, sometimes exclamatory, and not unfrequently rhapsodical—often a combination of both.

Billy White was an orphan, claiming distant relationship with the Waldrons, who had taken him under their protection, as an act of duty and common humanity. Philena Foote had been a friend and domestic of the late Mrs. Waldron, retaining her place in the family after that lady's decease, until she seemed to be a necessary part of the household. Mr. Waldron introduced Lockwood to this lady, as well as the fact of being on horseback, and some distance apart, would permit.

"This youth," he added, pointing to Billy, "is the same I mentioned as being mentally weak; or, to speak more to the point, I should say, wanting in coherency of thought, and consequently, expression."

Billy, perceiving that he was the subject of remark, said, "I-n-g-i-n-s!" in a manner indescribably slow and emphatic; for when not laboring under excitement, he combined both moderation and emphasis in an extraordinary style and degree. Judith glanced furtively at the borderer, expecting, perhaps, to see a smile upon his lips; but she saw instead, a softening of his sunburned face into an expression of pity.

"Address him, if you wish. He appreciates kindness more than one might be led to suppose by his looks at first sight," said Waldron, observing, doubtless, Lockwood's sympathetic face.

"How do you like such a long journey in the woods, my man?" the borderer inquired, in a gentle voice.

"T-o-m-a-h-a-w-k-s!" responded Billy, looking vacantly at Lockwood, and moving his left hand in a circle, with the index finger extended; the kind of gesticulation most common to him.

"Come, tell me what you have seen on the way, good youth" Lockwood resumed, in the same friendly tone.

"S-k-a-l-p-i-n' k-a-i-v-e-s!" quoth Billy, absently, continuing monotonously to saw circles in the air.

"I dare say, Billy, you have seen deer cross the trail, or sunning themselves in the pleasant glades; and herds of buffaloes on the great levels, snorting, plunging, running and tearing up the earth?"

"P-o-s-s-i-b-l-e!" responded Billy, without seeming to comprehend in the least the purport of the question addressed to him.

"Billy, wake up! Did you not hear the gentleman ask you about buffaloes?" interposed Judith.

The sound of the young woman's voice appeared to reach momentarily the boy's dull senses. He turned his eye toward her wistfully —a gleam of intelligence beamed across his mild and mournful features.

"J-u-d-i-t-h b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l."

"You see that he has wit enough to flatter the other sex," observed Mr. Waldron, with a smile.

Judith was embarrassed somewhat by this rejoinder, and remarked that flattery, she believed, was a trick that the stupidest fellow could readily learn.

"W-o-o-d-s — I-n-j-i-n-s-i-g-h-t — J-u-d-i-t-h," added the underwitted, looking steadily at Judith.

These words seemed to Lockwood so significant, that he could not refrain from noting particularly their effect upon the object to whom they were directed. She was evidently unprepared for these apparently harmless and unmeaning expressions, but had sufficient tact to overcome her confusion in a moment.

"M-a-n-w-o-m-a-n-f-o-l-l-o-w-e-d."

Judith remained to the brow, and darted a quick, searching glance at the borderer, who now felt it to be his turn to dissemble his feelings of embarrassment.

"Can you draw a bar sight upon a rifle, good Billy?" asked Lockwood, immediately, in hopes to turn the current of the lad's thoughts.

But the gleam of intelligence had vanished. He said, "P-o-w-d-e-r-h-o-r-n-!" and drew more circles in the air.

"What a sight of persiflage there is about him to-day," asserted Philena, revealing to Lockwood a voice rather thin in volume, with a strong disposition to drawl, that reminded one of Billy's peculiarity in that way.

We will remark, in this connection, that everything that seemed in her view improper, inappropriate, or unique, passed under the general head of "persiflage," to which word she evidently gave a wide and universal significance.

"Great darkness covers the lad's mind," put forth Slingsby. "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, even unto the three and twentieth generation. Ah, ah!" With which profound reflection Obed tipped once more upon his toes and fell back to his place.

"There's a bein'," deposed Philena, philosophically nodding toward Obed, as he modestly checked his horse, "that hasn't a head full of proclamations. If there's anything that I hate, it's proclamations!"

The word "proclamation" ranked next to "persiflage" with Philena, and was employed when the latter would not quite express her meaning.

"The critter has the gift of speech to a considerable degree; but when it comes to fightin' with the redskins, it's my conviction we shan't have much to depend on," said Never-fail, who, with "Sure-death" across the bow of his saddle, had been riding beside Waldron for the last ten minutes.

Philena tossed her head scornfully, and cast a reproving look at the forester.

"Whatever gifts Mr. Slingsby may have," she answered, with palpable severity of manner—"and all people have their gifts in one way and another—he hasn't the gift of persiflage."

"There you have me at an advantage, miss, for I don't understand Choctaw well enough to know the meanin' of persiflage, persiflage, or whatever it may chance to be," responded Never-fail, with great moderation.

Feeling it beneath her dignity to make any rejoinder to this, Philena curled her lip contemptuously, and quickened her speed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE BRIBERY.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

I WILL not mention the name of the town in which the following incidents occurred, for the Judge is still living there, and he may have reformed ere this. The town was on the Mississippi River, and at that time in its infancy; and it was infested by a band of reckless men who robbed and murdered when they could, and spent the rest of the working hours in gambling. Charles Masters moved into the place with his wife and family, and opened a store. He was a young man, not over thirty years of age, and possessed a firm, pure spirit, and a stout, kind heart. One of his first efforts, after becoming acquainted with the leading people of the place, was to rid the town of the miserable cut-throats who infested it; and to this end he pointed out their haunts, and endeavored to make the public officers do their duty. He had several of them arrested, but, though the proof of their guilt was as plain as the sun at unclouded noonday, yet he could not get one of them convicted.

At length it was determined among the gamblers that Charles Masters should be put out of the way, and three of their gang agreed to murder him. To this end they waylaid him as he was going to his house one night, and when he reached the place where they had concealed themselves, they rushed out upon him, and tried to stab him. But the young merchant proved too much for them. He had been warned of his danger, and he was prepared. He walked at night only with a double-barrelled pistol in each hand. On the present occasion, he shot down two of the assassins, and as he presented the pistol to the head of the third, he fled.

But the young man was not yet free. On the very next day he was apprehended for murder. At first, he only laughed at the idea; but ere long he found that there was something serious in it. The sheriff informed him that if he would leave the place, and never return to it again, he should be let off; but this Masters scorned to do. He demanded a trial; and he was informed that he should have it. The court was to sit in about two weeks, and until that time had expired he was confined in the jail. His wife and oldest child suffered much, but kind friends cared for them, and did all they could for their comfort.

The greatest difficulty Masters labored under was in finding a lawyer. The only lawyer of any eminence in the place had been retained on the other side. But in this fortune favored him most signally. Sargeant S. Prentiss chanced to pass through the town on his way to defend a man from the charge of murder in a distant town, and he promised to be on hand to defend Masters. He had known the young merchant, and his sympathies were at once awakened in his behalf.

The day of trial at length came on. The prosecution had strained every nerve, and as yet the defence had gained but very little testimony. No one had been present, save the prisoner and the principal witness, at the time the two men were shot, and no evidence could be obtained as to the evil habits of the two dead men; for, though many knew them, yet none dared to testify.

Prentiss came, and he called to see the prisoner.

"I see they mean to condemn you," remarked the lawyer, as he sat down upon the low pallet.

"Of course they do," returned Masters. "They fear me here; and those who do not fear me fear to testify for me, save to my own character. They dare not say one word against the desperate characters with whom we have to deal."

"Are you acquainted with old Nash, the judge," Prentiss asked.

"Somewhat," returned the prisoner; "and I think he is a hard man. I know he gambles much, and I fear he has an interest in some of the gaming-houses here."

"So I thought," said the counsel, with a meaning shake of the head. "But never mind," he added, "I will see what I can do to night. Things do not look so dark as they might; nor yet so light as I wish they did. But keep up a good heart. You have friends about you, and I have some at work who are not suspected."

"Ah!" uttered Masters, interrogatively.

"Yes, sir," returned Prentiss, with a smile; "I have some perfect villains at work. One of your friends placed a thousand dollars in my hands, and I shall pay it all out to these very gamblers—that is, to such as suit me."

"But the thousand dollars, sir?"

"Has been raised by your friends. So rest easy on that score."

After chatting awhile longer upon various topics, Prentiss took his leave.

The court house was filled with eager people. Charles Masters was in the prisoner's box, and old Nash was upon the judge's bench. This judge was a stout, heavily-framed man, somewhat over forty years of age, with a dark, lowering face, and dull, grey eyes. He looked more like some burly landlord than like a judge. He gazed wickedly upon the prisoner, when he entered; but his countenance changed when he saw that small, lame man come in. With the short, halting limp, and the regular tap of the heavy cane, Sargeant S. Prentiss entered the room. He took his seat close to the prisoner, and then cast his eyes over the scene.

First came the selecting of the jury.

"You may challenge whom you will," Prentiss whispered, "but it will make little difference. They wont present a disinterested man here, and I think you may as well accept the first one that is called. They will be all bribed—every one of them."

"Do you think so?" returned Masters, turning pale.

"I am sure of it. But don't let that trouble you."

At length twelve men were called up, and as Prentiss ran his eye over them, he understood the game at once. They were poor, miserable fellows—hangers on about the different gaming-houses—and the court supposed they would every one be challenged, and in reserve were held the bold, reckless men who were to follow. The prisoner accepted the jury as it was presented, much to the astonishment of the spectators and the chagrin of the court.

Thus arranged, the trial proceeded. The indictment was read, and the prisoner pleaded not guilty. The prosecution opened the case, and then the witnesses were called up. When Nathan Knox took the stand the people were eager. He was the man who had made his escape after Masters had shot his two companions. He swore that he, and the two men who were now dead, had met the prisoner on the night in question, and that they stopped him and asked him what he would give them if they would put him in the way of clearing out some of the gaming-houses. He told them to get out of his way. This rather offended them, and they told him he had better keep civil if he knew when he was well off; and thereupon he drew a double-barrelled pistol and shot his two companions dead.

"Look ye, sir," uttered Prentiss, when he came to cross-examine this witness. "Now mind that you answer me truly, for if you speak one single falsehood to me you do it at your peril."

The fellow started at this, for there was something in the fire of those great, dark eyes of Prentiss that Mr. Knox was not used to. But he had no time for thought.

"Now why were you and your two companions concealed in that narrow passage?"

"We wan't concealed."

"What! Beware, sir! Not concealed! What do you mean by that! Why, my good man, you are giving the lie to all you have said. Now tell me why you went into that dark passage and staid there until the prisoner came along! Tell me!"

"We may have turned in there, sir; but we wan't hid. We just turned in to wait for the man to come up."

"And how long did you have to wait?"

"Not over half a minute."

"Be careful. May it not have been a minute! Remember, sir, a falsehood now will upset your whole testimony. Do you were seen?"

"Well, sir, twasn't over a minute, any way."

"Very well. And now which of you stepped out first when Mr Masters came along?"

"Ned Hammond did."

"And you next, eh?"

"No, sir. Jack Nottell did."

"Now look ye, sir," thundered Prentiss, in that tone, and with that look which never failed to confound an evil mind, "you swore that you three met the prisoner on the sidewalk, and that you met the prisoner—that you stopped, and he stopped. What did you mean by that."

The witness stammered out some reply, but he could not clear himself from the snare he had got worked into. However, Prentiss let him go as soon as he had sufficiently shown him up; and the next witness was called.

When all was in of evidence on both sides, the case looked dark for the prisoner. Some few had testified to his good character; and some had even dared to testify to the fact that the gamblers had sworn to get rid of him on account of the exertions he had used against them. And the prisoner's own account of the affair was also received. The judge plainly insinuated that the prisoner would be hung, and the jury winked at each other knowingly.

A lawyer named Compton summed up for the prosecution, and finally Prentiss arose, as was his right to do, to make his final answer. He reviewed a part of the testimony a second time, and then went over with the prisoner's own statement. He pointed to the wife and children of the young merchant, and drew a picture of such a man losing a foul murder. It was so preposterous that even the judge plainly showed by his looks that he didn't believe it. Prentiss saw that he had fastened the attention of both court and jury, and after dwelling a few moments longer on the picture he had drawn—after painting the youth struggling against such enemies as were arrayed against him, and seeking to rid his adopted home of the foul pest of the gambler's herd, he raised his slender finger towards heaven. It rested there a moment, and then sank down again. The silence was breathless—painful—but it was not to last long. Prentiss raised those strange eyes of his to the judge, and the stout man quailed.

"Your honor," he resumed, in a tone so strange with marvellous power and depth that every breath was instinctively hushed when it came upon the still air, "I have one system of evidence which I have not used, and which may God grant I may not have to use. Of the perjury which has gone up, rank and reeking from yonder stand, I will not speak. But I will speak of a more deadly damning thing which has crept into this house. I mean—*bribery!* I hold at this moment in my possession evidence of the most wholesale bribery that I ever heard of. In all my intercourse at the bar I never came across a case which could equal this for gigantic, bold-faced, deadly bribery. Rake open the very bottomless pit, and drag therefrom the worst villains that an incensed God has consigned there, and they would shudder upon beholding the proofs of guilt which I could show them. I could show them an innocent man, compassed round about with evil, struggling for the salvation of his kind from Satan's fell grasp—that man shouldering the enmity of thieves, gamblers and assassins—waylaid by murderers on his way to his own quiet, peaceful home, and, to save his own life, obliged to shoot down two men whom you all knew for blood thirsty villains. Then I should show them that man seized by his enemies, who were too cowardly to attack him physically again, and cast into prison upon the charge of murder. And—listen—I could show them now a fearful scene! I could point out to them those men who should save the innocent victim of all this wrong *bartering away his life for a bribe!* Ay; selling his very life to the meanest scum of this game-cursed place for a paltry bribe! In God's name bear me. Let not the story be told. As you value your sacred names here, and your immortal souls hereafter, let not the tale go forth. God forbid that I should herald the damning proofs! O, let me crush the burning, blighting evidence in my grasp ere another eye save mine, and *that eye which never sleeps*, can see it! Your honor, I have done. Gentlemen of the jury, I fear not to trust my client in your hands. I know the foul tempter which has whispered to you; ay, and which has dared to whisper *to one higher than you*, but I fear not his power over you. I can read the noble spirit in your faces now. I can see in each face before me a free and independent soul, and it seems to speak out—to speak plainly—thus: 'We are men—God keep us from temptation. We are jurors—no power can make us do wrong.'"

For some moments after Prentiss sat down all was still as death. It was not so much the words which had been spoken, as the tone, the spirit, the keen fire of the eye, the strange curl of the lip, and the significant pointing of that finger, which had moved the people there. The jury had at first been frightened, but the closing sentence of the address had placed them on better terms with themselves and with the speaker. They knew that he was aware of the bribery, but they now believed that he did not know they had accepted it. The judge was nervous and uneasy. He dared not meet the eye of Prentiss, and he hardly dared look up. His charge to the jury was all prepared, but he dared not read it. He had prepared it as the evidence was being given in, but he crushed it now in his hands.

But finally he arose, and after stammering awhile he simply informed the jury they had heard all the evidence, and that they might retire and make up a verdict. They went out, and were gone only some fifteen minutes; and when they returned they brought in a verdict of—Not Guilty!

There was a shout of joy went up from the people there assembled, though there were some low curses. The judge disappeared soon as possible, and the jury shrank away by a side door.

"Mr. Prentiss," asked the young merchant, as quite a party were assembled in the house of the latter in the evening, "what evidence had you obtained of this bribery?"

"None that would be good for anything in a court of justice," replied Prentiss. "I managed to gain considerable information on the subject by paying roundly for it, but I could not find a man who would give me his name, or consent to make oath. But I knew what that judge was made of; and so of the jury. I knew they had been bribed, and that your death was sure unless they could be frightened off. Of course they supposed my pockets were full of documentary proof. But it's all as well."

And so it was. A joyous evening stretched away into the night, and on the following morning Prentiss started for his home. This trial had put a ball in motion, and opened the eyes of the people, and ere another year rolled around the gamblers had departed and found new homes—some in other towns and cities of earth, and some ——

ANECDOTE OF FRANKLIN.

When quite a youth Franklin went to London, entered a printing office, and inquired if he could get employment as a printer.

"Where are you from?" inquired the foreman.

"America," was the reply.

"Ah!" said the foreman, "from America! a lad from America seeking employment as a printer. Well, do you really understand the art of printing? Can you set type?"

Franklin stepped to one of the cases, and in a very brief space, set up the following passage from the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John.

"Nathaniel saith unto him, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see."

It was done so quick, so accurately, and contained a delicate reproof, so appropriate and powerful, that it at once gave him character and standing with all in the office.—*Notes and Queries.*

A SAILOR KING.

William IV, King of Great Britain, when at the age of fourteen, entered the British navy as a midshipman, performed the ordinary duties of his station, and went through the regular grades of promotion to a Post Captain. He served upwards of six years in the grade of midshipman, and performed in the whole, something like eleven years continuous service, when he was raised from the grade of Post Captain to that of a Rear Admiral, and was about the same time created Duke of Clarence. It is seldom the son of a king has had the same chance of thorough discipline that William IV. enjoyed while an active member of the navy; and it is said that his manner partook in some measure of the roughness of a seaman.—*N. O. Picayune.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE ALTAR AT HOME.

BY MRS. E. T. ELDREDGE.

Dear, dear to our hearts is the altar at home,
No shrine seems so sacred wherever we roam;
For the dear ones knelt there that have gone home to rest,
Then ask us not why 'tis held sacred and blest.

We've knelt at the altar at the still starry hour,
When a father's loved voice had a sweet, soothing power,
When a mother's fond hand wiped away every tear,
Then ask us not why 'tis held sacred and dear.

Together we'll kneel 'neath the fair azure skies,
Nor blush for the tear-gems that moisten our eyes:
We'll pledge to our Father where'er we may roam,
That we ne'er will forget the dear altar at home.

When we kneel at this shrine so sacred and dear,
Where the sweet vesper hymn fell low on the ear,
Where the whispered "good night," when the blessing
was o'er,
Once hallowed our childhood, we sigh nevermore.

[Written for The Flag of our Union]

THE GOLD FIEND:

—OR,—

SHADOWS ON THE HEARTH-STONE.

A STORY OF BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

BY FRANCIS A. DURIVAGE.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLOSING SCENES.

Some days after the events described in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Norman was one morning summoned to her drawing-room to see a person who had called "on important business." Upon entering the room, she was somewhat surprised to find Mr. Ezekiel Sandwich in waiting. She recognized the acquaintance of Milford on board of the Saldauah, although his personal appearance was now quite different. He was attired in a fashionable suit of black, and his subdued manner showed that a residence of some weeks in the imperial city had materially benefited his style. Yet he clung to his provincialisms as a Scotchman does to the peculiarities of his "Lowland tongue."

"I hev the honor, I believe, of addressin' Mrs. Percy Norman," commenced the visitor.

The lady bowed, and signing Mr. Sandwich to resume his seat, sank gracefully into a *fauteuil*, concealing under an air of well bred indifference the curiosity and anxiety which his message had excited.

"I never had the honor of bein' presented to you—I believe that's the phrase, Miss Norman," said Sandwich; "but as business is business, I sha'n't make no apologies."

"I am ready, sir, to hear whatever you have to say," said the lady, inclining her head.

"Wall—there's nothin' like comin' to the pint," said the Yankee.

Thereupon he set his hat on the carpet beside him, passed his hand through his hair, settled himself comfortably and even nonchalantly, attached one of his large hands by the thumb to the arm-hole of his waistcoat, and lifting his watch-seal carelessly, gave a preliminary hem and commenced:

"A widder, I believe."

Mrs. Norman bit her lip and bowed.

Sandwich hitched his chair close to the lady's, and bending forward, nodded confidentially and winked.

"Lucky escape you had the other day, ma'am."

"From the wreck?"

"No, no! from the second ventur—matrimonial speculation number two. Griffin was a hard one. Everybody was astonished when that match came out. 'What on airth,' sez I—"

But he stopped short, absolutely withered into silence by the look he received.

"I will trouble you to confine yourself to business, sir," said the lady, with an air of extreme *hauteur*.

"I beg pardon—I forgot—run off the track—but I'm on the rail again, now. Thank you for reversin' the ingine, ma'am. As you say, business is business, and no mistake. Wall, then—touchin' your first marriage. You married a widower?"

"Are you sure that you are speaking to the point now, sir?"

"O, yes'm, I'm O. K. A widower?"

"General Norman was a widower, sir."

"Yes—and he had a son?"

"He did, sir."

"I knew it. Wall—he disappeared one day."

"He died, sir."

"No he didn't, ma'am—there's where you're mistaken."

"We had intelligence and proof of the death of that unfortunate boy," said the lady, with some uneasiness.

"And we hev intelligence and proof of his existence at this present time of speakin'," returned Sandwich.

"You make a very extraordinary assertion, sir."

"Not more extraordinary than true, ma'am. I repeat that the child of General Percy Norman by his first wife is now livin' to claim his share of his father's inheritance. Of course, you're delighted to hear it, ma'am. Ladies love romantic events, and step-mothers are allers affectionate."

"If you came here, presuming on my loneliness, to insult me, sir," said Mrs. Norman, making a motion to rise, "you may find yourself mistaken in your calculations. I am mistress of this house, and—"

"A broad hint that my room is better than my company," interrupted Sandwich. "Very well, ma'am, I can go. My communication is a singular one, to be sure, but as you are the party most interested in it, I thought I'd come first to you with it. But if you don't care about hearin' it, or if you think I'm unworthy of credit or intrusive—I can carry my pigs to a better market. There are newspapers in this city that would pay me handsomely for the first use of the facts I am furnished with. There's nothing like a bit of family scandal—a *fo paw* in high life, and the like, to run up the circkulation of a paper."

And Mr. Sandwich made a feint of rising.

"You mis-understand me, sir," said the lady, with an affected smile. "Sit down. I thought you only designed an impertinent jest, but if you are really serious, I am perfectly willing to hear you."

"I am really in airnest, Miss Norman," said Sandwich. "I come to tell you that General Norman's only son and heir is livin', and that I have proofs of his identity."

Mrs Norman had great self command. She was partly prepared for this communication by her own information and belief in the existence of the missing heir; but the confident assertion that his identity could be proved, carried terror to her heart, and it taxed all her resources of art to conceal it from the keen eyes now fixed upon her face as if they had power to read her soul.

"Something of this sort," she said, carelessly, "I have heard before. Mr. Griffin more than hinted at it."

"It was a random assertion, ma'am, on his part. He could not know what I know."

"Then Mark Selwin—"

"Was his own son by the woman whose appearance saved you from becoming the second wife of a man whose first was already livin'. I put that woman, by the way, on Griffin's trail. She writ me an anonymous letter fust and then followed it up by callin' on me, and I convinced her appearance just in the nick of time at church. So you owe me one, remember."

"I am indeed indebted to you, sir. Add to the obligation by answering me one question. Does the pretended son of General Norman know what claims are put forward for him?"

"He does not."

"Then that person, whoever he is, did not send you to me?"

"Of course not. I came on my own individual hook."

"You are aware that so extraordinary a claim must be substantiated by evidence that would be admitted in a court of law?—that I should not recognize any claimant to the name and fortune of my late husband, without unquestionable proof?"

"Of course not. I see you understand business, ma'am. Excuse me one moment."

He went to the door, opened it, and called out, "Number seven."

Mrs. Norman turned her eyes inquiringly to the door, through which entered an old man, respectably attired, who advanced slowly into the room, and raising his eyes to the lady, seemed to challenge recognition.

Mrs. Norman had risen from her seat, in the eagerness of her curiosity. For a moment she looked upon the new comer in doubt, while Sandwich, bending forward, keenly scrutinized the expression of her countenance. He saw the blood retreat from cheek and lip, giving place to an ashy paleness—he saw her eyes dilate—he fancied he heard her heart beat quick, and then he heard her gasp forth, in the silence of the room:

"Staples! *you* here!"

"Yes, my lady—I have come back at last."

Mrs. Norman strode up to the old man, seized him by the wrist and drew him away to the farther part of the room, and into the embrasure of a window.

Sandwich would have given a good deal of money for a decent pretext to follow them and listen. But this was inadmissible. So he remained on thorns watching their interview. Though the lady spoke in almost inaudible tones, the energy of her gestures showed that she was urging, commanding, or supplicating. The old man Staples—for such it appeared was his real name—seemed to be resisting persistingly the persuasions or commands of the lady, shaking his head from time to time, and meeting her eye with a resolute and uncomplying expression

"Number seven is a trump, and no mistake," thought the Yankee.

Presently Mrs. Norman, forcing the old man into a seat, came towards Sandwich. Her face was now as flushed with emotion and excitement, as it had lately been colorless, and she wore one of her most fascinating smiles.

She took his arm, and leading him to a sofa, made him sit close beside her.

"Delilah!" was Mr. Sandwich's mental ejaculation.

"Mr. Sandwich," said the lady, "I'm satisfied that you are a man of business—indeed, I have heard of your great ability, and I am quite sure your merit has not been exaggerated."

"O, ma'am, you do me excessively proud," said Sandwich.

"I flatter myself," pursued the widow, "that if I had been a man, I should have made an excellent business person myself."

"Not the least doubt on it, ma'am."

"Well, then—let us speak together like rational people that understand business. It is no use to mince matters."

"None at all."

"I need not conceal that the appearance of a claimant to a large portion of my husband's fortune, is an awkward thing for me."

"Why, of course it is."

"Brod up to luxury, I can ill afford to relinquish it."

"Of course."

"You must sympathize with my position?"

"I do, ma'am, I assure you."

"Place yourself in my position, and fancy how you would feel."

"Rayther streaky, ma'am, of course."

"While on the other hand, this person—this pretender—for I do not yet acknowledge his claims—has probably lived a very different life."

"He's had a hard row to hoe, I assure you, ma'am."

"The possession of wealth might not prove a real benefit to him."

"P'r'aps not."

"While you and I, Mr. Sandwich, know how to employ and enjoy it in our several ways."

"True as gospel."

"You perceive the drift of my argument?"

"It's pooty plain, I reckon."

"Well, then, we will continue to take a plain, business, common-sense view of this affair. Now the proofs of this person's identity and claims are, if I understand you right, in the hands of yourself and yonder old man."

"Exactly."

"No one else suspects their existence?"

"Yes, two others—but their silence is easily bought up."

"Easily bought up!" cried Mrs. Norman. "I see you conduct an affair as I would suppress this evidence—even at a heavy outlay. I will pay you and yonder man handsomely for your silence—and give you wherewithal to purchase the non-interference of the other persons you alluded to. More—if the person you put forward as a claimant to this property is in needy circumstances, I will settle an annuity upon him that will place him above absolute want. Now, my dear Mr. Sandwich, what do you say to this arrangement?"

"Wall," replied Sandwich, "it doosn't lie with me alone to accept or reject proposals. You see I'm acting in partnership."

"Yes—you had a sharer in your speculation, Mr. Sandwich," said the widow, with a smiling face, while hatred burned, as she spoke, in her fiery heart.

"Exactly—and I must speak to my partner. Number Seven! jest step this way a minit, will ye?"

Staples came towards them. He had been waiting impatiently for such a summons.

"Staples," said Sandwich, "I and this lady hev been talking this affair over, and while she has an eye to the main chance, she talks very fair—very fair indeed, I must say. She's willin' to make a fair offer, to hush this thing up. Now you know you're as poor as Job's cat, and I should be glad of a little ready rhino to push my patents along. What do you think? I will do jest as you say. Will you sell out, and at what price?"

"What will you give me, individually, madam, for suppressing the truth?" cried the old man quickly, addressing Mrs. Norman.

"Why," said the lady, "admitting that you furnish me the proof of what you allege, I will give you for its suppression five thousand dollars, for your share."

"And I tell you," said Staples, resolutely, not exultingly, "that if you would heap this room with gold, I would not be silent as to what I know."

"Bravo, Number Seven!" said Sandwich, jamping up and slapping his coadjutor on the back. "I said you was a trump. No, ma'am, Staples and I are not in the market—money wont buy us—we're the incorruptible Siamese twins. Hoop! hurrah!"

"Then, sir, only one resource is left me—defiance and a contest of your claim. I am in possession—and present wealth gives fearful odds."

"Well," said Sandwich, "I aint exactly a candidate for the purchase, and I'd spend my last cent to see General Norman's son righted."

"You have nothing further to say, I presume," said the widow.

"I beg your pardon," said Sandwich. "I *her* a few last words to nre off. I am armed so strong in honesty, your threats pass by like the idle wind which I regard not, as I heard a feller at the Park Theatre say. I am willin' to show you the cards we hev in our hand. My friend Number Seven can swear that you employed him to get the boy outer the way—luckily, in roving about the world, he hasn't lost a letter or two that you was green enough to write him, signed with your own name. Wall—we can also produce the man, who for a certain sum paid him by Number Seven, took charge of the boy—also we can show by an exhumation of the coffin said to contain the body of General Norman's son, who died of a contagious disease, that it contained only a waxen image—so cunningly was the whole scheme devised. Hold on—I hevn't done yet. We've got hold of the child's old nuss, who can swear to certain personal marks which will be found upon the gentleman in whose behalf we claim. I tell you the whole chain of evidence is complete—not a link wanting. It's a splendid case, and we're bound to go in and win."

To this speech, delivered with great volubility, she to whom it was addressed listened with painful eagerness. The evident sincerity of the speaker, the iron chain of proof that he adduced, carried conviction to her soul, and as he finished she sank back on the ottoman with a long drawn sigh of anguish, and covered her face with her hands.

"See to her," whispered Sandwich to Staples. "Keep her here till I come back. I wont be gone a minute. It doosn't take long to tell good news—and he's waiting close at hand."

Though some time elapsed before Sandwich returned, in that long interval Mrs. Norman spoke not one word—did not remove her hands from her face—did not change her attitude. Staples would have been alarmed, had not the convulsive heaving of her bosom beneath the waves of lace that covered it, proved that her heart still beat, and that tumultuously.

At last the door opened, and Sandwich appeared with a young man whose bloodless face and blanched lips betokened great agitation. He seemed to walk like a man in a dream, and was led, rather than advanced of his free will to Mrs. Norman.

Sandwich touched her on the arm. "Look up," said he, gently, "I hev brought you the son and heir of General Norman."

Mrs. Norman dropped her hands, and starting into an upright position, gazed on the pale and agitated face before her.

"Matthew Milford!" she exclaimed.

"Matthew Milford no more," said Staples. "But Percy Norman, the avenged son of my wronged master."

"It is for you, madam," said Milford—for we must still call him so—"to say whether we meet as friends or foes."

Mrs. Norman rose slowly to her feet, and walking to the speaker, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and gazed long and intently in his face. Her expression, at first, was keen and almost fierce, but by degrees it melted into as much of tenderness as her haughty features were ever capable of conveying. In that moment of time what a long agony of strife in her bosom! what a giant effort before she could say, with a world of meaning:

"Percy, you saved my life?"

The young man was still silent.

"I was blind, utterly blind," said the agitated woman, "or I should have recognized traits of expression and character that would have awakened suspicion of the truth. You looked just now like him. Fear not my enmity. It is useless to struggle against fate—against Providence, rather. I cannot but see an overruling power in this restoration. Take whatever belongs to you—I will make no opposition. But spare me exposure, if you can and will. If you knew what a life of suffering I have led—what remorse I have experienced in the midst of these fictitious and stolen splendors that surround me, even you would pity me, in spite of the wrongs that I have heaped upon your unoffending head. I would offer you my hand, if I feared not that you would refuse it."

"Here is my hand," said Milford. "It is written that we should not be judges of each other. May God pardon you, as I forgive you!"

It was a cold winter evening—but not a cheerless one. The stars sparkled in the sky over a bold and mountainous country covered with snow, broken by dark rocks and darker pines and cedars. In the north, were the fires of the glittering constellations that paled beneath the brighter effulgence of the Aurora Borealis. Now and then opening vistas in the woods and rocks showed the noble Hudson a glittering sheet of ice. Along a smooth and well-beaten pathway glided a small Albany cutter, drawn by a black horse, and filled with furs. Within the sleigh sat two persons, a young man and a young woman—a bridegroom and a bride.

"To-morrow, Matthew," said the lady, "you return to your drudgery in the city. Ah, if you would only let me resume my profession and help you! My exertion, persevered in for a year or two, would soon spare us both the necessity of labor."

"No, dearest Irene," said the young man, "your day of drudgery is past. I could not bear to see you the slave of public caprice. But tell me—do you not regret the theatre with its gay lights, its brilliant multitudes, its enthusiastic applause, its floral tributes?"

"Never, Matthew—my soul was never in my profession."

"And you would be content to live poor and undistinguished the rest of your days?"

"With you—ah, more than contented! But what splendid mansion is this that rises on our left, with its long avenue of evergreens, and lights glittering in the windows? What a romantic situation! Is it a public house?"

"I think not. We should be still two miles from the tavern, where I proposed passing the night. But the gate is hospitably open. Suppose we drive up the avenue, and take a closer view of this highland chateau!"

"It is not getting late?"

"It will hardly occupy two minutes."

And without waiting for a reply, the young man entered the avenue, and drove up to the door of the house. It was a large building in the French chateau style, standing on the summit of a system of terraces, and surrounded by a plantation of trees. The evergreens gave it a cheerful aspect, even in winter, while a large conservatory, illuminated by colored lamps, and forming a wing of the house, brought the charm of summer into the midst of winter. As the horse's bells ceased ringing, a servant made his appearance, and took the rein which the young man tossed to him.

"Do you know these people?" asked Irene.

"I should know them," replied her husband. "Yes, we are expected guests."

He lifted the light form of his bride from the sleigh, and they stood together on the piazza.

"Look upon this matchless prospect, for a moment, dear. Look at those bold crags—at that silent river—in summer a tide of life and beauty. Is it not an enchanting scene?"

"Beautiful indeed!"

"Then forgive me, dearest Irene, for deceiving you. This is your future home. I have bought this house and land."

"You—you have bought it!" stammered Irene.

"Yes, for instead of being a poor scribe, I am a rich man. You loved poor Mat Milford, but you married Percy Norman, the son and heir of General Norman of New York."

He pressed her to his heart, and then hurried her into the house. In the brilliant saloon into which he ushered the bewildered girl, were familiar forms and familiar faces. John Bradwell was there to receive his daughter. Our old friend Sandwich shook hands with her. Mr. and Mrs. Milford were presented. No denouement on the stage was ever half so well contrived, as this lover's surprise, played off, too, on a professional actress.

Now here, upon this scene of happiness, we might perhaps let the curtain descend. Our story is told. It would be tedious and superfluous to trace back the links of the chain—to recount the remorse which for so many years had tortured the gentle bosom of Mrs. Milford, while accepting the services of a son, from one on whom she knew she had no claim, though she was unaware of the high position to which he was entitled. That was Harvey's secret, which he had been paid for keeping. Harvey Milford lingered along for a few years, wasted from his dissipation, but feeble and shattered from the consequences of his previous course of life. He and his wife, who was devoted to him to the last, lived in a small, neat cottage, a few miles from Norman's mansion, which he had purchased for their occupancy. When Harvey died, an event expected long before it happened, his widow went to reside with Percy, who felt for her all the affection of a son. They had been companions in hardships and trial, they were companions in comfort and ease.

Mrs. Norman, who at the settlement of the estate, was generously dealt with by the young man she had so cruelly betrayed, abandoned the fashionable world of New York, and went abroad to pass the remainder of her life, selecting Italy as her home. She became, in time, an austere devotee, and, as a convert to the Romish church, carried into the solitude of a convent her remorse and her repentance.

Sandwich, tired of trading, simultaneously took unto him self a wife and a sheep farm in Vermont. He made frequent visits to "Highland Hall," and was always a most welcome guest. A rumor has recently reached us, that Dr. John Glossop is "engaged," but this wants confirmation. Mr. John Philip Kemble Ryegate made a little fortune as a manager, and returned to England to enjoy it, adding to his first year's income, by publishing a work on the United States, in which the Yankees were handled without gloves, and which consequently met with a prodigious sale. Messrs. Nouse and Coals still continue to publish their brilliant literary journals. Laddles, the gardener, was last heard of, experimenting on the production of the Victoria Regia lily, and Mr Meechy still demands the smallest current coin of the confederacy from every passenger that uses his plank walk. Redwood, ever haunted by the image of the man he had sacrificed, led a miserable life, and died a wretched death.

We have purposely omitted all allusion to Gerald Griffin till our closing paragraph. We left him mourning over the death of a son, whose existence he never dreamed of till the moment that he lost him—yet whose ruin he had precipitated; the unconscious instrument of his own mysterious punishment. And that punishment fell on him with crushing severity. He came to his desolate home, from the grave of the ill fated Mark, a changed man. To endure the society of a woman whose presence was a constant memento of crime and sorrow, was a portion of his prolonged and deserved chastisement. But he did not defy or question the justice of his suffering. He bowed his neck to the yoke. Though he had met with losses, he was still rich. But he no longer employed his wealth to create wealth, simply for the joy of laying up treasures upon earth. He learned to look on gold gathered for its own sake—on the spirit of avarice, of which he had been the fiendish incarnation, with shuddering abhorrence. Thenceforth, until the close of his life, he employed his means, his acumen, and his time, in performing tardy acts of justice and charity. To those he had wronged pecuniarily, he remitted anonymously, sums amply sufficient to cover their losses. He was the nameless benefactor of the poor—anonymous contributor to many a noble charity of that imperial city, whose charity and hospitality are boundless. He outlived his wife, but during her latter years she was a bed-ridden invalid, unconscious of the kindness which sought to alleviate her suffering. Griffin, though he finally exhausted his means in social charities, bore throughout his life the reputation of being a hard hearted miser, and though his conscience told him that he had partially atoned for the evil he had committed, yet to his latest day had to endure the pointed finger of scorn, and hear, more than whispered as he passed, "There goes the GOLD FIEND!"

News Glances.

SIZE OF THE WEST.—Illinois would make forty such States as Rhode Island, and Minnesota sixty. Missouri is larger than all New England. Ohio exceeds either Ireland, Scotland or Portugal, and equals Belgium and Switzerland together. Missouri is more than half as large as Italy, and larger than Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. Missouri and Illinois are larger than England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

MOUNT HOLYOKE.—On the top of Mount Holyoke, on a clear day, ten mountains can be seen; one in New Hampshire, one in Vermont, one each in New York and Connecticut, and six in Massachusetts. The spectator always sees lying below him, thirty towns in Massachusetts, and six in Connecticut.

POTATO ROT.—The Eastport (Me.) Sentinel says that the potato rot is destroying the hopes of farmers in that section who have looked for profit from the potato crop. The disease has also made its appearance in the vicinity of Bangor. We have not heard of the rot in this vicinity.

MIDDLESEX HORSE RAILROAD.—We hear that a number of influential men of this city are to undertake the project of building the Middlesex Horse Railroad, which is to start from Somerville and pass through Charlestown, into Boston.

STATUE OF WASHINGTON.—We are glad to learn from the Florence correspondent of the Newark Advertiser, that Mr. Powers, the sculptor, has completed the model for his statue of Daniel Webster.

TO MAKE FRUIT VINEGAR.—Mix one quart of molasses, three gallons of rain water and one pint of yeast. Let it ferment and stand four weeks, and you will have the best of vinegar.

BUSINESS AT THE WEST.—The papers report that the railroads in the Western States are beginning to feel the beneficent effects of an increase of business.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN PARIS.—There are in Paris 277 municipal schools, receiving 50,542 pupils, and entailing on the city a yearly expense of 1,320,400 francs.

JOURNALISM IN THE LAST CENTURY.—The first daily newspaper printed in Virginia, was in 1780, and the subscription price was $30 per copy per annum.

ALCOHOL.—Alcohol was first invented and used to stain the cheeks of the ladies of Arabia, 950 years ago. It still reddens portions of the human face.

THE FLAG OF OUR UN

MATURIN M. BALLOU,
EDITOR AND PROPRIET

TERMS of the FLAG OF OUR UNION, $2 ... invariably in advance, ... discontinued at the expiration of the time paid for. ... be inserted.

FEMALE GAMBLERS.

In this country we have few or no fe... blers; and let us not indulge in our fair c... mu...ity crediting the fact to the want ... tunity. Opportunity is never wanting w... passion is to be gratified. Let us rather ... a freedom from this soothing and blig... to the high tone of mind and morals we ... for a healthy excitement in concealing ... charity and the refined pleasures of ... society. It is appalling to contemplate ... with his whole soul engrossed in the ... the gaming table, at one moment in ... some of feverish hope, at another plu... the depths of a rayless despair. It is ... to watch his tremulous hand as he ... prize of his children's bread with it, ... towards him those guilty winnings ... only a snare and a temptation. What ... it to be a woman under such circumsta... this is a common enough spectacle abr... continent wasting places, and parti... Baden Baden, where gaming is author... one of the real, if unconfessed, attract... place. An English lady thus record... her observations on the conduct of h... the gaming table, and the picture is ... one. "On no occasion did I watch h... than on the evening of the dress ball ... last company in Baden were assem... birds of prey, whose profession it was ... them, doubtless, came armed for the c... and prepared to 'fool them to the to... bent.' The following day was San... passed through the public walks on t... church; and having time to spare, le... the rooms, which even at that early h... crowd of people hanging round the ... tables. On our return, we entered the ... and then this frightful scene of madn... its height.

"I doubt if anything, less than the ... of the senses, can enable any one full ... and comprehend the spectacle that ... table offers. I saw women, disting... rank, elegant in person, modest, and ... served in manner, sitting at the ro... table, with rateaux and marking card... hands; the former to push forward ... and draw in their winnings, the latte... down the events of the game. I sa... different hours through the whole o... To name these is impossible; but I ... say that two English women were am... There was one of this set whom I wa... after day during the whole period of ... with more interest than, I believed, w... able; for had I studied any other as a ... I might have found less to lament. ... young—certainly not more than two ... and though not regularly nor brilli... some, most singularly winning both ... and demeanor. Her dress was ele... peculiarly plain and simple. A close ... bonnet and gauze veil; a quite-co... gown, with less of flourish and frill ... than any other person; a delicate l... which, when ungloved, displayed so ... some rings; a jewelled watch of pec... dor, and a countenance expressive of ... thoughtfulness must be remembered ... who were at Baden, in 1833. They ... member, too, that enter the rooms ... would, morning, noon or night, still ... her nearly at the same play, at the ... table.

"Her husband, who had an unqu... the air of a gentleman as she had ... though not always close to her, was ... distant. He did not play himself; ... cied, as he hovered near her, that h... rance expressed anxiety; but he re... sweet smile with which she always m... with an answering smile; and I sa... slightest indication that he wished to ... her from the table. There was an ex... the upper part of her face that my ... science would have consigned into ... very foreign to the propensity she sh... Once she sat, hour after hour, and ... day, not even allowing the blessed Sa... gives rest to all, to bring it to her; the ... constantly throwing down handfuls of ... pieces, and sometimes drawing them t... till her young face grew rigid from ... and all the lustre of her eye faded i... of vexed inanity. Alas! alas! is ... woman a mother? God forbid!"

THE CHARTER OAK CONE.—In ... storm, the famous oak at Hartford, C... in which Wadsworth hid King Charl... of the old colony of Connecticut in ... blown down. That one of the m... links that bound the present to the p... severed.

NEW ORLEANS CUSTOM HOUS... Sam's officers have taken possession o... building, which is described as a s... structure—the great room being 180 ... and 85 feet broad.

REMOVAL.—We have removed on ... publication to No. 22 Winter Street, ... building especially erected for our la... where we shall be happy to meet our ...

ADVERTISING.—A thief who said a ... in New York State, lately, for ten d... years because he received no more for ... aide handsel."

THE FLAG OF OUR UNION.

MATURIN M. BALLOU,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

☞ Terms of the Flag of our Union, $2.00 per annum, invariably in advance, being discontinued at the expiration of the time paid for. See imprint on last page.

FEMALE GAMBLERS.

In this country we have few or no female gamblers; and let us not malign our fair countrywomen by crediting the fact to the want of opportunity. Opportunity is never wanting where any passion is to be gratified. Let us rather attribute a freedom from this soothing and blighting vice to the high tone of mind and morals which seeks for a healthy excitement in ennobling deeds of charity and the refined pleasures of cultivated society. It is appalling to contemplate a man with his whole soul engrossed in the chances of the game, table; at one moment raised to the acme of feverish hope, at another plunged into the depths of a rayless despair. It is harrowing to watch his tremulous hand as he stakes the price of his children's bread with it, or draws towards him those paltry winnings which are only a snare and a temptation. What then must it be to a woman under such circumstances! Yet this is a common enough spectacle abroad, at the continent watering places, and particularly at Baden Baden, where gaming is authorized, and one of the real, if unconfessed, attractions of the place. An English lady thus records some of her observations on the conduct of her sex at the gaming-table, and the picture is a terrible one. "On no occasion did I watch higher play than on the evening of the dress ball. All the best company in Baden were assembled; the birds of prey, whose profession it was to watch them, doubtless, came armed for the encounter, and prepared to 'fool them to the top of their bent.' The following day was Sunday. We passed through the public walks on our way to church; and having time to spare, looked into the rooms, which even at that early hour had a crowd of people hanging round the gaming-tables. On our return, we entered them again, and then this frightful scene of madness was at its height.

"I doubt if anything, less than the evidence of the senses, can enable any one fully to credit and comprehend the spectacle that a gaming-table offers. I saw women, distinguished by rank, elegant in person, modest, and even reserved in manner, sitting at the *rouge et noir* table, with raiment and marking cards in their hands; the forenix to push forward their bets and draw in their winnings, the latter to prick down the events of the game. I saw such at different hours through the whole of Sunday. To name these is impossible; but I grieve to say that two English women were among them. There was one of this set whom I watched day after day during the whole period of our stay, with more interest than, I believed, was reasonable; for had I studied any other as attentively, I might have found less to lament. She was young—certainly not more than twenty-five—and though not regularly nor brilliantly handsome, most singularly winning both in person and demeanor. Her dress was elegant, but peculiarly plain and simple. A close white silk bonnet and gauze veil; a quite-colored silk gown, with less of flourish and frill by the half than any other person; a delicate little hand, which, when ungloved, displayed some handsome rings; a jewelled watch of peculiar splendor, and a countenance expressive of anxious thoughtfulness must be remembered by many who were at Baden, in 1833. They must remember, too, that enter the rooms when they would, morning, noon or night, still they found her nearly at the same play, at the *rouge et noir* table.

"Her husband, who had as unquestionably the air of a gentleman as she had of a lady, though not always close to her, was never very distant. He did not play himself; and I fancied, as he hovered near her, that his countenance expressed anxiety; but he returned the sweet smile with which she always met his eye with an answering smile; and I saw not the slightest indication that he wished to withdraw her from the table. There was an expression in the upper part of her face that my blundering science would have construed into something very foreign to the propensity she showed; but there she sat, hour after hour, and day after day, not even allowing the blessed Sabbath, that gives rest to all, to bring it to her; there she sat, constantly throwing down handsful of five franc pieces, and sometimes drawing them back again, till her young face grew rigid from weariness, and all the lustre of her eye faded into a glare of vexed inanity. Alas! alas! is that fair woman a mother? God forbid!"

THE INFIRMITIES OF GENIUS.

The errors and infirmities of genius have generally been treated in two ways, both alike erroneous. One party, making no allowance for the temptations that beset genius, both from within and without, have stigmatized its faults with unfeeling, unmanly and unphilosophical harshness, judging the erring man of genius by a severer rule than they would apply to common mortals; while another set of men have sought to extenuate and find apologies for every aberration from the right path on the part of the man of uncommon gifts, as if genius conferred an exemption from the rules of common morality. The time has arrived when men view this subject in a clearer light—or, rather, perhaps, the sphere and immunities of individuals are better defined. A man is no longer ostracised merely because he is a poet, or painter, or a sculptor, cut off from sympathy and regarded with suspicion, because differing from the mass in his taste and capabilities. But in fact, genius is no longer such an anomaly, because taste and talent are nearly universal, and men stand altogether upon a more level footing.

In speaking of Burns, Christopher North says: "While the hypocritical and the base exaggerated all that illustrious man's aberrations from the right path, nor had the heart to acknowledge the manifold temptations strewn around his feet, the enthusiastic and generous ran into the other extreme, and weakly—I must but say wickedly—strove to extenuate them into mere trifles—in too many instances to deny them altogether; and when too flagrant to be denied, dared to declare that we were bound to forget and forgive them on the score of the poet's genius—as if genius, the guardian of virtue, could ever be regarded as the pander to vice and the slave of sin. Thus they were willing to sacrifice morality, rather than that the idol set up before their imagination should be degraded; and in far worse injury, and offered far worse insult to Virtue and Religion by their slurring over the offences of Burns against both, than ever was done by those offences themselves; for Burns bitterly repented what they almost canonized; and the evil practice of one man can never do so much injury to society as the evil theory of a thousand. Burns erred greatly and grievously; and since the world knows that he did, as well from friends as from foes, let us be lenient and merciful to him whose worth was great; but just and faithful to that law of right, which must on no consideration be violated by our judgments, but which must maintain and exercise its severe and sovereign favor over all transgressions, and more especially over the transgressions of those to whom nature has granted endowments that might have been, had their possessors nobly willed it, the ministers of unmingled good to themselves and the whole human race."

These opinions, calmly expressed, must carry conviction; and the more especially since the individual selected for illustration was one whom the writer both admired and eulogized.

THE SEASON.

Cold weather is at hand. We have heard of a frost. Overcoats have made their re appearance. Housebolders not forehanded are anxiously inquiring the price of coal. The tantalizing summer, with its few days of torrid heat, and its many days of cold storm and rain, has departed. The flowers in the windows and the garden-plats are gaudy but odorless. The wind is blustering. But after all, if this breath of autumn be "an eager and a nipping air," it is at least a healthy tonic. It sends the blood dancing through your veins; it braces your nerves; it fits you for intellectual and physical exertion. How hard is it to study and write in summer, unless you are in some cool nook by the seashore, and then the sands and the waters and the rocks all combine. Those books that are recommended for "summer reading," what vapid and idealess things they are! And very properly, too—for it is impossible to grapple with an idea with the thermometer at eighty. But now with an equable if cool temperature we feel like exertion. We have none of that unsettled restlessness which impels people in summer to give up their quiet home and rush away into all sorts of out of the-way places. Cool weather —even cold weather—is more favorable than hot, we think, to a healthy state of existence. We think Bayard Taylor did well in going to Lapland. We fancy he will write a better book on the frozen North than he did upon the torrid East. However, nothing we have said must be construed into an approbation of a state of the weather which keeps the mercury coiled up some dozen degrees below zero day after day. We reserve the right of protesting when that occurs, but in the mean while have nothing to say against autumn, be its breezes ever so sharp and shrewd.

EDITORIAL INKDROPS.

A man in England in pulling down an old house he had bought found 2003 guineas.

Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams have been very successful on the English stage.

Actors and dancers are famous for reaching extreme old age.

There are in Russia 6000 miles of telegraph used for government messages.

According to Webster, there are 100,000 words in the English language.

In Hardenburg, Germany, they used to choose the man with the longest beard, burgomaster.

Marshal Pelissier has been made a duke by Napoleon III.

When a lady intends to blow you up, ask her to commit her remarks to paper.

A porker owned by Mr. Townsend of Lynn, twenty months old, weighs 1075 pounds.

A new way of advertising jewelry is to lend it to fashionable belles at watering places.

Nearly 200 persons are known to have perished in the deluge at Last Island.

Europe may boast of her Baden-Baden, but America is satisfied with Saratoga.

The yolk of egg and salt, used as a plaster, is said to cure rattlesnake bites.

The English journals are almost exclusively occupied with Spanish and Italian affairs.

The new dome of the capitol at Washington will cost a million and a half.

During the last month the Merrimac at Lowell rose more than three and a half feet.

The emperor of Austria has restored confiscated estates to 635 Hungarians.

In some localities in Maine the potato rot has committed ravages.

The valuation of taxable property in Haverhill, Mass, is $4,672,000.

Abdul Medjid is the best ruler Turkey has had for many years.

Mr. McCormick's reaping machines have been very successful in France.

The Madison (Indian) Courier says there will be a vast quantity of acorns this year.

Dr. O W. Holmes has sold his place in Pittsfield for $18,500.

TERRIBLE.

William Dove has been convicted at York, England, of murdering his wife by administering strychnine. The question for the jury to decide was, whether he was responsible for his acts. Long habits of intemperance had induced partial aberration of intellect, and an acquittal was demanded on the score of insanity, but this plea the jury refused to entertain. The London News said of this criminal, without reservation: "William Dove has been convicted of poisoning his wife by strychnine. In that verdict we cordially concur, but we do not concur in the recommendation to mercy which accompanied it. A more cold-blooded crime never was committed. The murdered woman was the murderer's wife—married so late as 1852—poisoned by him in 1856. The vile motive which urged the fellow was the wish to save her doctor's bill, and perhaps—to marry another woman. The intention to commit the act was almost proclaimed to his friends and neighbors—to the doctor, the clergyman, and the poor woman herself. Certainly the hour of death was foretold. All this, of course, was done with the view of disarming suspicion—of playing the villain so deliberately as to make the very existence of a human creature capable of such things seem a sheer impossibility. But William Dove, like William Palmer, his master in the art of murder, was no timid artist. His design was fixed; he held, right on, his course. For a whole week he watched the agonies of his delicate wife under the influence of strychnine—he wept over her—lamented her certain death. Five different times did he administer the subtle drug; on the sixth occasion it proved fatal."

A GREAT SWIMMER.—One of the best swimmers of Lyons lately made a bet that he would cross the Rhone on his back, carrying on his stomach a small table, on which should be placed two bottles full of wine, six eggs on a plate and four glasses. The fall of either of those objects would involve the loss of the wager. The swimmer won it. His name is not mentioned, but he was more of an artist than the classical gentleman who swam the Hellespont "all for to see his dear."

AGRICULTURE.—The premiums of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society held at Pittsburg on the 30th of this month, are on a liberal scale and well calculated to promote and encourage the agricultural interests of the noble old Keystone State.

LIGHT FOR A YEAR.—A stick of phosphorus placed in a large dry phial will afford light enough to discern objects in its immediate vicinity and will last for a twelvemonth. The phial should be kept in a cold place when there is no great current of air.

WHALING.—At Lubec, Me., a whale was lately captured after a spirited battle. He yielded his life to such weapons as guns and axes, and produced three barrels of oil. The scene of his capture was like that described in Sir Walter Scott's "Pirate."

UNLUCKY.—Recently an establishment in Brooklyn, N. Y. devoted to the manufacture of an incombustible composition, took fire and was burned with all its contents—making quite a poor show for the invention.

THE END OF ROMANCE.—At Albany, N. Y. is living a lady of aristocratic English birth, who forfeited her position in society, by marrying her father's groom—" all for love."

LARGE HOTEL.—The St. Charles Hotel, at New Orleans, is said to be the largest in the country, having accommodation for about 2000 guests.

CANING.—Col. Butler of Lowell has received a gold-headed cane from his California friends.

BALLOU'S PICTORIAL DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION

For the present week embraces the following contents

"The Lost Heir; or, The Young American Soldier." A Tale of 1812. By Mrs. Caroline Orne.

"The Cottage of My Mother," engraved by J. M. Pratchett.

"The Gardener's Boy." A tale by Susan H. Blagden.

"Lines to S. M. H." by F. S. H.

"Pyrotechnics," a humorous story by Frederick W. Saunders.

"The Child's Prayer." Lines by H. D. C.

"A Left Night in the City." A sketch by Mrs. E. Wellman.

"Home," verses by Robert R. McKay.

"The Shipwreck," a tale by Mary A. Lowell.

ILLUSTRATIONS

A fine emblematic design of the State of Rhode Island, with its armorial bearings, and finely illustrated surrounding, from the pencil of Billings.

View of the Basin of Commerce at Ostend.

Scene on the Coswell Farm—a graphic illustration of life on the sea-coast.

We give another of our large engravings, covering two pages, representing Washington at Valley Forge—one of the darkest hours of our revolutionary history. This is one of the finest pictures ever published in the Pictorial, and evinces the artistic power of the pencil of Billings.

Representations of Irish and Scotch Laborers, in two portraits—not a genuine picture, but a real "broth of a boy," the other destroying remnant Turf Carries of Lochaber, Scotland.

*** The Pictorial is for sale at all the Periodical Depots in the United States, at six cents a copy.

The two of The Flag and one copy of the Pictorial, when taken together, for $4 00 per annum.

Foreign Items.

Advices from China state that the revolution was progressing. Sixty five rebels were beheaded in one day.

The widow of Lord Byron is yet alive and hearty. She has recently purchased the residence of the late poet Rogers, in London.

Paris proper has increased two hundred thousand in population since Louis Napoleon's first assumed sway.

The Russian government is about to send out next month from Cronstadt, two corvettes on a scientific voyage round the world.

The number of newspapers published this year in Switzerland, which has a population of 800,000 souls, is 263, being twelve more than in 1855.

Lord Clarendon has received from the American government testimonials to be presented to British seamen for services rendered to American vessels in distress.

Mr. Heald, the young Englishman of fortune who married Lola Montez shortly after her separation from the king of Bavaria, died at Falkstone, England, last month, of consumption.

An original sketch of a Holy Family, painted by Raphael for Francis I., of France, has just been discovered in Florence. The possessor of this treasure is an Italian refugee.

The marchioness of Aylesbury has constructed hot and cold baths for the use of the laborers and their families in the vicinity of her residence. Soap and towels are provided, and a cup of coffee afterwards given.

Two ladies belonging to the first families in Munich have embraced the operatic profession in spite of the remonstrances of their friends, and both appeared the same night, July 10th, in *I Montecchi e Capuletti*, and were highly successful.

Dewdrops of Wisdom.

Little children are the lilies of the valley of life.

Swift declared he was too proud to be vain. The distinction is a nice one.

The best way to discipline one's heart against scandal is to believe all stories to be false that *ought not* to be true.

Henrich Heine once remarked that the rich were too apt to think that authors and artists, like green fruit, were improved by lying upon straw.

Every eye loves beauty, and there is no countenance, not blushed or deformed by guilt, that may not—indeed, does not—brighten and gladden some devoted soul.

A weak mind sinks under prosperity, as well as under adversity. A strong and deep mind has two highest tides—when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon.

R. W. Emerson in his latest work says the solvency of England "is maintained by means of a national debt, on the principle, if you will not lend me the money how can I pay you?"

The only way for a man to escape being found out, is to pass for what he is. The only way to maintain a good character, is to deserve it. It is easier to correct our faults than to conceal them.

There are fewer tests of a happy home within than the flower decorated window and neatly kept garden; and there is no occupation for the leisure hours more calculated to keep it so, or to soothe the mind.

Wisdom allows nothing to be good that will not be so forever; no man to be happy, but he that needs no other happiness than what is with in himself; no man to be great or powerful, that is not master of himself.

It was among the loveliest customs of the ancients to jury the young at morning twilight; for as they strove to give the softest interpretation to death, so they imagined that Aurora, who loved the young, had stolen them to her embrace.

Joker's Budget.

What is it that causes a cold, cures a cold, and pays the doctor? A draft.

The schoolmaster, who flogs the boy, feels it a great deal more than the boy he is flogging; at least the schoolmaster always says so!

Virtue is no security in this world. What can be more upright than penny logs and editors! Yet both are destined to be *boxed*.

How can a man who has no wings, be said to be "winged" in an affair of honor? Because in fighting a duel he makes a goose of himself.

A Hibernian Senator, speaking of suicide, said "The only way to stop it, is to make it a capital offence."

Ladies generally shop in couples. When a lady has any money to spend, she usually leaves taking a friend with her to see her spend it.

"You have only yourself to please," said a married man to an old bachelor. "True," replied he, "but you cannot tell what a difficult task I find it."

A friend of ours on being told that, if he wanted good health, he must "forego cigars," answered that he "would rather go *four* cigars than forego one."

A witty editor, who has just failed, says he did it with all the honors of war, and retired from the field with colors flying—with Baggage flaunting from two windows and the door.

"Solomon, I fear you are forgetting me," said a bright eyed girl to her lover, the other day. "Yes, Sue," said slow Sol, excusing himself, "I have been for getting you these two years."

A schoolmaster in Cornwall, advertising his establishment, says—"Every boarder must be supplied with a Bible and a prayer-book, a knife and fork, three towels, and a silver desert spoon all of which, except the books become the proprietor's perquisite on the pupil's quitting school."

Quill and Scissors.

There is at present living in Glasgow Scotland, an aged man, named John Ray, a private watchman, who has been the father of the rather extraordinary number of thirty children. He is sixty-eight years of age; was twice married; had by the first wife twenty-eight children, and by the second and last, two. He is now seventeen years a widower, and not altogether positive that he will not marry again.

A new description of filter has been brought forward and exhibited. A pint of water, dark and turbid, was poured into a glass vessel, and in an instant it was poured forth clear as crystal. This very rapid process of filtration was produced by atmospheric pressure on the water, and it is claimed that a thousand gallons may be filtered by the same process in an hour.

Robert Schumann, an eminent musical composer and pianist, recently died at Bonn, Germany, aged 46. Some of his symphonies and many of his songs are familiar to American audiences, and have created genuine admiration of Schumann's great merit as a composer. For the last two years of his life he was a confirmed lunatic.

Mr. Peabody proposes to place in the hall of the Peabody Institute, at Danvers, an elegant organ, making no limit as to its cost, if in the opinion of the trustees such an instrument would be appropriate and desirable in connection with the particular use for which the hall was designed.

In New Hampton, N. H., as Mr. Nathan Ballard was climbing a poplar tree to dislodge a gray squirrel which he had shot to make some broth for a sick neighbor, a limb broke, and he was precipitated to the ground, a distance of 25 feet, dislocating his neck, and killing him instantly.

Last Island, in Louisiana, where the late storm has proved so disastrous to life and property, is a fashionable watering place in the gulf, to which large numbers of people resort during the summer season. It is an island twenty-two miles from the mouth of the Atchafalan.

Napoleon I. I. has sent a magnificent diamond snuff box to Rev. Mr. Stewart, chaplain in the U. S. Navy, who wrote and published in New York, not long since, a letter endorsing Mr. Bonaparte's conduct while he was in this country as quite correct.

Mrs. Susan C. D. Bixby, wife of Rev M. H. Bixby, of Maulmain, Burmah, died at Burlington, Vt., a short time since. She had just returned from Burmah, and was on her way to the home of her childhood. Her age was twenty-seven years.

The coronation of Alexander II. has caused a rise in the prices of jewelry in Berlin—Russian merchants and Polish Jews having diminished the stock of brilliants to the amount of millions of thalers' worth.

Whitefield preached in thirty five years eighteen thousand sermons. He once put himself on what he called short allowance, namely, three sermons on the Sabbath and one only on every week day.

Supposing the sea to have a mean depth of 1000 feet, it has been calculated that the amount of common salt it would contain would be equal, in extent, to five times the mass of the Alps.

According to official data, the whole number of persons who have emigrated to the United States during the thirty-six years, previous to Dec. 31, 1855, have amounted to 4,482,857.

At a recent schutzenfest (shooting festival) in Switzerland, the first prize was awarded to a young lady, a beauty of the country, daughter of a Bernese councillman.

Otis Hagar recently killed a striped snake in New Salem, only three feet long, but it contained ninety-five young snakes, each about eight inches in length.

At Hempstead Plains, Long Island, a little boy was killed by lightning while lying with his head in his mother's lap.

The value of domestic cottons exported from New York and Boston, the present year, is thus far about three millions of dollars.

There are thirty newspapers in Cuba, but with the government muzzle on, they don't amount to much

Congress has passed an appropriation of $88,000 for the Portsmouth, (N. H.) custom house and post office.

Rev. Laban Ainsworth, of Jaffrey, N. H. is now in his one hundred and third year.

There are in New Orleans twenty-eight hundred drinking houses to a population of 80,000.

There are over eighty brickyards in the single town of Haverstraw, on the Hudson.

The victor in an argument can afford to dispense with "the last word."

Marriages.

In this city, by Rev. Mr. Edmonds, Mr. Daniel P. Holmes to Miss Jerusha Morse.

By Rev Mr. Gaylord, Mr. Thomas Burns to Miss Pamelia Ferguson.

By Rev. Mr. Lovell, Mr. H. Richard Curtlette Miss Melinda Forbes.

By Rev Mr. Schwarz, Mr Johan Huber to Miss Jane Watson.

At Charlestown, by Rev. Mr Miles, Mr. Lewis K Smith, of Lincoln, to Miss Eliza Abbott.

At Cambridge, by Rev. Mr Skinner, Mr James D. Osborne to Miss Jennie D Perkins.

At Lowell by Rev Mr Blanchard, Mr. Cushman Stevenson to Miss Anna M Winston.

At Leominster, by Rev Mr Eastman, Mr James Phelps to Miss Mary M. Pierce, both of Fitchburg.

At Edgartown, by Rev. Mr Reed, Rev Nathaniel B. Blanchard to Miss Sarah P Fisher

At Worcester, by Rev Mr Wayland, Mr. Josiah A. Thompson to Miss Mary E Thayer.

At New Bedford, by Rev Mr Hemines, Mr. Henry Thacher to Miss Margaret Riley.

At Abington, by Rev Mr Lincoln, Mr. Newell M. Varney to Miss Lydia C Bonney.

At Winchester, by Rev Mr Eddy, Capt. Samuel H. Mead to Miss Ellen M Richardson.

At North Bridgewater, by Rev Mr Sanford, Mr. Boalls Sanford, Jr. to Miss Lucy T. Haigood.

At Nantucket, by Rev Mr Swasey, Capt. Charles H. Bate to Miss Sarah G. Coggeshall

At Greenfield Prof James Gardner Vose, of Amherst College, to Miss Charlotte Ripley.

Deaths.

In this city, Mr. Andrew Cowen, 28. Mrs. Mary Jones, 27. Mr John P Andrews 49. Mrs Lucy A Berry, 64. Widow Rosa Hagemeyer, 76. Miss Sarah E. Bailey, 17. Widow Emeline P. Mason, 38. Capt. Elijah Dow, Mr. John G Nixon, 63. Mr. John Taylor, 30.

At Charlestown, Miss Mary Anne C. Lesbey, 19; Mr. William Cluck, 55.

At Chelsea, Mr Jonathan Cooper Prentiss, 75.

At East Cambridge, Widow Hannah Curtis, 73.

At Roxbury, Mrs Susan Swett, 57. Mr Samuel Degett, 52.

At Salem, Widow Susan Hazeltorn, 90.

At Danvers Mr Samuel Putnam, 73.

At Quincy, Mr Stephen F Child, 31.

At East Abington, Widow Betsey Jacobs, 78.

At Newburyport, Widow Hannah Woodbury, 78. Mrs Mary Adelaide Wilson, 34. Mrs Mary Page, 79.

At North Fairhaven, Capt. Samuel Pierce, 66.

At New Bedford, Miss Mary Rowland Parker, 66. Mr. John R. Booth, 45.

At Clinton, Dea. John Burditt 79.

At Dudley, Widow Susanna T. Pope, 74.

At Fall River, Miss Helen M. V. Hatch, 19; Mrs. Candace W. Macomber, 65.

At North Hadley Mr John Osborn, 52.

At Athol, Miss Julia Smith, 18.

At Rehoboth, Mrs. Elam, wife of Capt. Philander Smith.

At Swansea, Widow Eunice McNeal, 73; Mr David Cathcart, 58.

At Raynham, Mrs. Horton Day, 65.

At Otis, Mrs. Mary Kenyon, 75. Widow Reliefa Hunter, 86.

ITEM IN PARIS.—There are 1,200 parochial schools, receiving 50,542 children, and giving a yearly expenditure of 1,200,000 francs.

THE LAST CENTURY.—The first paper ever printed in Virginia, was in the year 1730. The subscription price was 840 pounds of tobacco per annum.

THE SHAWL was first invented and worn by the ladies of Arabia, and still reddens portions of the

...ngs Glances.

...WEST.—Illinois would make ... Rhode Island, and Minnesota ... larger than all New England. ... Ireland, Scotland or Portugal, ...lium and Switzerland together. ...an half as large as Italy, and ...ark, Holland, Belgium, and ...souri and Illinois are larger ...land, Ireland and Wales.

...KE.—On the top of Mount ...ar day, ten mountains can be ... Hampshire, one in Vermont, ...ork and Connecticut, and six ... The spectator always sees ly...ining towns in Massachusetts, ...ticut.

...-The Eastport (Me.) Sentinel ...o rot is destroying the hopes ...section who have looked for ...to crop. The disease has also ...ce in the vicinity of Bangor. ...d of the rot in this vicinity.

...ORSE RAILROAD.—We hear ...influential men of this city are ...roject of building the Middle... ...d, which is to start from Som... ...through Charlestown, into

...ASHINGTON.—We are glad to ...lorence correspondent of the ..., that Mr. Powers, the sculp... ...the model for his statue of

...E VINEGAR.—Mix one quart ... gallons of rain water and one ... it ferment and stand four ... have the best of vinegar.

...IE WEST.—The papers re... ...ds in the Western States are ...e beneficent effects of an in...

...TION IN PARIS.—There are ...pal schools, receiving 50,542 ...g on the city a yearly ex... francs.

...THE LAST CENTURY.—The ...er printed in Virginia, was in ...scription price was 840 per

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

A HARVEST HYMN.

BY J. M. FLETCHER.

The yellow fruit, the mellow fruit
  Is dropping from the trees,
The golden grain on hill and plain
  Is waving in the breeze.
Then cheerily and merrily
  The harvesting begin,
And reap the field and store the yield,
  Till all is gathered in.

The God above, the God of love,
  Has smiled upon the year,
And every where the earth and air
  Are vocal with the cheer;
Then carefully and prayerfully
  The harvesting pursue;
Nor fail to raise a hymn of praise
  To whom the praises due.

The chilling air, the killing air
  Of winter soon will blow,
But little need the farmer heed
  The storms of rain and snow;
For cosily and proudly
  Before the cheerful blaze,
With plenty crowned and friends around,
  He'll pass the winter days.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE IMPERIAL KEYS.

BY FRANCIS W. BUTMANN.

In the year of our Lord 249, Philip the Arabian was Emperor of Rome; an arbitrary man of great learning and a foreigner. Hated by the people, and in turn hating them, his administration was attended by myriad difficulties, and no one wondered when a rumor flew thousand-tongued through the city, that the immense army on the northern frontier had revolted.

"I have awaited it long," cried one of the Plebs to another, on the Capitoline Hill, "and Decius is to be sent to them!"

"Decius? How know you?" eagerly interrogated a tall, stately woman, closely veiled, who was passing at the moment.

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Per Jove! By my learning, good woman!" but his interrogator had already left him, and was sweeping swiftly down the Sacra Via. Crossing the forum with a light but commanding step, she stopped before the amphitheatre a moment, where two men were leading a royal Bengal tiger in chains, and heavy with narcotics, towards his claustrum.

"On whom is *he* to fatten?" asked she, of the keepers.

"On whom the emperor wills," said the first.

"That is," added the other, "to starve. For neither gladiators nor Christians shall we see torn up this two months; and he and his fellow, a Nubian lion, that would make your mouth water, may lose their claws in ease, for aught he careth."

"Christians?" asked she, "anything that way?"

The drowsy beast slowly turned his green, cavernous eyes upon her.

"Less asked, less known. Yet they *do* say, that Vitellius," and he looked up, keenly, "is preparing us some work." But the woman was gone ere he finished.

"A Christian herself! I'll warrant her" she other added.

"Not she. It is Marina, thou clod! who was, last ides, the emperor's wife."

Meanwhile Marina went on her way, and finally disappeared beneath the peristyle, and within the arch of the palace on the Palatine. Sweeping aside a heavy curtain, she came at last to a large apartment opening on the inner court, and whose tesselated pavement was kept always cool by shade, and whose air, by a fountain, that, dashing aloft through a far dome, iced the temperature of the upper apartments. Lying on the pavement, pillowed only by her white arm, lay another woman, younger, perhaps, and fairer than Marina, for unveiling herself, the other displayed eyes, large, black and hollow; cheeks, from which a fortnight's trouble had rubbed the bloom and roundness; lips, pale and bleeding, where she had slightly torn them with her teeth. Her black hair was coiled around her head and fastened by a silver arrow, and her tall figure was almost disproportionately round and slender, as she bent above the sleeper. The golden hair of the latter, broken from its gemmed netting, streamed in curls over the black squares of the pavement, her thin, white garments showed the symmetry of her limbs. Not so tall as Marina, she still might have been above the medium size. Her lips, parted above pearls, were crimson, and a soft flush of health glowed on the cheek just touched by long, brown lashes. From her hand a scroll had fallen. Marina took it up; it was the gospels in Greek.

"As I expected," murmured she; "the book I gave her, fool wretch of a Christian! But *I* have brought her to it. *I* have sealed her fate! and she the daughter of Vitellius, high priest of Jupiter. I could destroy her!" and she looked it. But the next moment changing her manner, as the sleeper opened a pair of hazel eyes: "News, dearest!" she whispered; "guess, Valeria, what it may be."

The daughter of the high priest rose, and concealing the scroll within her drapery, questioned quickly, "Good or bad?"

"Both. And as you take it."

"Decius?"

"Is to be sent to the revolted army."

"That is foolish in Philip. The soldiers love Decius, and will proclaim him."

"Have a care what thou sayest!"

"Dost thou hope, Marina, to be empress again?"

"Not Philip's. And scarcely do I regret that I am not now. See. I am free from a chain I loathed, though the chain was gilded and I was proud to wear it!"

"Tell me how it was, Marina!" and the gentle girl laid her hand on the other with a caress, and seated her beside herself. Marina waited an instant, and then vehemently burst forth:

"If I was an unfaithful wife, Philip could not have known what I took such pains to conceal! If I loved another—if I loved Decius—"

"Decius?" cried Valeria, involuntarily pressing her hand to her heart, as if to still its beating, while her eyes revealed a sudden depth of feeling.

"Ay, Decius, I tell you!"

"One thing, Marina. Did he love, too?"

"And if he did?"

"I could not think of him then, as now. He would cease to be noble."

"You speak plainly! It matters not. No. Think nobly now, as ever, of Decius. He scorned my advances. Do not dream that for that I despair. If we three live, *thou shalt yet see me die a conqueror!*"

"Nay, nay, Marina, thou wert Philip's wife—"

"I am not now!" she answered, exultingly. "That day! All the caresses he ever afforded, had he repeated; kissing my lips a thousand times, twining his white fingers in my long hair—it was perfumed and loose then, and I had color in my cheeks, my eyes were not hollow, and my lips were full and red—I was magnificent! I knew it. I obeyed him, and loved—"

"Hush! do not say it."

"That day," as if it gave her a pleasure to repeat it, "I woke early and called my maids. When my toilet was completed, I looked round for my bunch of keys, small, golden keys, and I wore them, though useless, as every Roman wife does, at my waist. They were not where I placed them, nor on the floor, nor in the caskets. My maids knew not what I sought. They were missing! Valeria, when a Roman matron is bereft of her keys, she is irrevocably *divorced*. I leaned one hand on the table, and pressed the other on my heart, as you did just now, Valeria. I could almost have pitied you. The great polished mirror hung opposite me; I saw myself pictured there, just as the truth flashed down on me. I left my astonished maids, and sought the atrium, where I knew Philip would be breakfasting alone.'

"'My keys!' demanded I, authoritatively.

"Without rising, he answered: 'I have sent the imperial keys to the Empress Julia—my wife!'

"'Your wife? And who am I?'

"'That, at least, is not your title,' said he, with a short laugh.

"'Who was I yesterday?' I questioned.

"'Ah!' he returned, 'yesterday I was besotted and adored you. To-day I am undeceived.'

"'Why not have killed me, Philip?'

"'It will be greater pain for you to live. Leave me. My messengers are already escorting the beautiful Julia hither; well pleased to be an empress!'

"'And the Empress Marina?' asked I, doubtfully.

"'There is no such person. You will leave me?' said he, coldly.

"All things grew dark to me, the room and the light. With my former rank and power, I could obtain all; now, I was obscure and impotent. I sat down and thought. A shout arose without, a confusion within. I looked up and saw Julia standing like a thing of light, shrouded in green and gold, a crown on her head, my keys at her waist, smiling, radiant, within the door. Then I came to you. It is eighteen days since. Julia was buried yesterday. Beware now! the keys may, nay *will* come to you!"

"To me?" cried Valeria, "O Heaven forbid! Die, then?" interrogated Marina.

"If it must be."

"Die, quotha! Dying is fine sport! But die if thou wilt!"

"And why should any one die just now?" asked a deep, manly voice, and looking up, the lofty form of Decius stood before them. Athletic, sinewy, graceful, and with a face exhibiting on its handsome exterior the singular mixture of a smile for one, and a seriousness for the other. Valeria sprang to her feet, blushing and joyful, but Marina, raising her languid eyes to his face, only said: "We thought you with Philip."

"I go at once, madam," he answered, respectfully. "But may I ask the lady Valeria will she accord me a few words alone with herself?"

Valeria hesitated a moment, half drawing her hair within the net, then said, "Willingly!" and led the way into the gardens, while Marina, only following them with her burning eyes, remained where she was, even after they disappeared in the winding walks. They proceeded some time in perfect silence, and at last paused under an ilex tree.

"Well," said he, at length, looking down at her and smiling.

"Will," she returned, half mimicking his tone.

"What is that scroll you have?"

She grasped it fervently.

"It is my strength."

"And what may that be?"

"Nay, of what use? Decius is a Christian, too."

"How know you that?"

"Marina told me and led me to the meetings."

"Marina is not a Christian. Marina deceiveth thee. Beware of her, I pray you."

There was an intellectual assumption of pride in Valeria's manner, instantly yielding, however, to gentleness, as she answered:

"Not a Christian? Marina is my friend! Do not speak so. I pity her."

"Has she confided in you?"

"She has told me all."

He looked down at her.

"And can you trust her *now*?" he asked.

"Valeria, I go away commander, I shall return Imperator. If she has told you so much, you well know that your life will be her first step to the throne beside me. She has brought you into Philip's fancy, and she has stirred up this revolt for my elevation and your destruction. I am to be sent away, because he knows that I love you. That I love you, Valeria." And he grasped her hands, looking into her eyes that vainly endeavored to evade him, till coming back, something within her forced them to answer the earnest gaze.

"Valeria, darling! Is it true that my heart tells me, that I shall bear you by my side through all the shocks of time, my wife?"

Timid and bashful as she was, his lips were too near hers to receive any but one answer, and then she hid her face, ashamed, on his shoulder.

An hour passed ere Valeria entered the place where Marina sat.

"Where is Decius?" asked the latter.

"Gone to Philip," answered the sweet tones that could scarcely catch their breath for joy, while she stood there palpitating with happiness, and treasuring every word and smile of that last hour. A heavy footfall was heard, and the dark-bearded face of Vitellius, as he advanced, trailing his dark robes on the pavement, became visible.

"Hail lady!" he said to Marina, with an obeisance, and then folding his daughter in his arms, gazed proudly at her beauty, softly stroking her shining hair.

"And so Decius," said he, "hath asked me for my pet! Think you I can lose her?"

"Never to leave you, father! Never to leave you!"

"My little rose! my Hebe!"

They were standing directly before Marina, who, rising, stumbled, and in regaining herself caught at the garments of Valeria; the Christian scroll fell to the ground, half unrolled, and Marina glided away. Vitellius relinquished his daughter, and picked it up, holding it at arm's length and perusing it an instant. Still holding it he slowly turned, and with a terrible brow confronted his trembling child.

"Is it thine?"

"Mine."

"How camest thou by it? Answer me! By the sacred twelve! who gave thee this?"

"I cannot tell thee that, father."

"Valeria, my child, my only child; vision of thy dead mother! dost thou, too, my last and best, fail me? O, better be dead! better be annihilated, than live a Christian! Where gathered these accursed lies? Tell me, child! Art *thou* a Christian?"

His voice grew dreadful, his face livid, his eyes transfixed her. Calmly extending her hand, she laid it on his.

"Father! Better not to know. Thou wilt not wish to be the instrument of thy child's murder. Wait. Thou canst even then punish."

He turned away with a bitter face and left her.

The sun was setting, and still Philip and Decius, the same day, were closeted in conclave. The former rose and walked the room with quick steps.

"I am determined," muttered he, inaudibly. "He threatens me with loss of empire; if he can, he may and will! But I shall have entered on a costlier kingdom. I shall have made Valeria my empress! He will hardly wish to dethrone her, thus I shall be safe there. But till he is gone, I cannot obtain her."

"What say you, sire?" asked Decius.

Philip wheeled about.

"I say this!" retorted he. "Go, thou shalt, and this night!"

"As you please. Yet Philip, I go, *but I return!* and return no subject of thine. If thou *wilt* envoy me, it is at that price! Thou flingest thy crown at my feet, for I re-enter Rome, wearing it. Thou hearest me? I speak truly, I shall dethrone thee as surely as thou forcest on me this unwelcome task! I shall be—"

"Emperor!" laughed Philip. "Be not so earnest, good Decius! if you can, you are at liberty. None but you can quiet this revolt, and as we are speaking plainly, I have you in my power. I can afford to laugh. Hasten, now, the die is cast. Farewell!"

As Decius withdrew, Vitellius, his pale face wearing a look of weary earnestness, and telling of the storm he had passed through, entered.

"Welcome, Vitellius! And what are the omens to-night?" asked Philip.

"Prosperous for your majesty, bitter for others."

"That is well; they were so that morning I took my keys from Marina."

"Prithee, great Philip, why did Marina seek my house that day?"

"The hag! She knew well the future. What a morning that was? To what discoveries did I awake from my voluptuous dreams. Then how like a wild, mad creature she demeaned. Never, Vitellius, shall I forget her as she sat there in her low chair; the yellow, morning light flooding this black room and those panels of dark citron wood; her brow bound with a band of gold, and the great masses of her almost purple hair; her eyes shining steadily at a fixed point on the lower wainscot, and the rich crimson never varying on her brown cheek; the breath coming evenly through those half open lips; slightly bent forward; her long, white arms, her long, white hands clasped above the knee;—till Julia came standing before us, bringing the sunshine with her, laughing, radiant, crowned, and making music with Marina's keys. They were two splendid creatures! Valeria will live and reign longer."

"Valeria? Hast thou no heart, Philip? Valeria!"

"Ay, I said it. Last night I watched the stars from twilight to dawn, and they all said it. Think not my Arabian lore deceives me! I said Valeria, but not just at this moment."

"Philip! it cannot be. She is betrothed to Decius."

"Tush! I am at this hour amiable. Decius and I understand each other, it is a trial of strength between us. We have measured swords. Not a month, and we shall see who conquers. Go now, Vitellius, and tell me if the fates ordain Valeria's union with the Roman emperor!"

The words trembled on the faithful subject's lips, could his daughter be empress and Christian both? True to his faith, even if it tore out his own heart by bleeding roots, he could destroy her, but now, the father in him was still stronger than the priest, though it should not be so long, as he silently vowed, and left the palace.

Meantime, two figures stood beneath an arch at no great distance, the moon illuminating with a warlike glitter the steel greaves and casing of the one, and nestling lovingly, as it were, in the golden curls and snowy folds of drapery that adorned the other.

"And remember, Valeria," said Decius, "that if Philip insists, thou must hold him off awhile; but twenty-one days from this evening, and I shall save thee. I cannot be here sooner. Thou art strong in thy very weakness, brave in thy pretty bashfulness; be faithful, and I shall yet crown thee, not only empress of my heart, but of Rome. And Rome is *our* right, not that of a foreigner, an Arabian!"

"I will never be false!" she returned; "and rather than surrender to Philip, I will die on the sword, as Roman women have done before me!"

"God bless and protect you, my treasure!" And he was gone.

Seven days passed and no disturbance of the quiet air within the palace of Vitellius, gave warning of advancing terrors. Marina, pale and quiet ruled the household, Valeria, joyous and confiding, pursued her happy course, and Vitellius, endeavoring to propitiate his offended deity, constantly kept watch in the temple. The morning of the eighth day dawned.

"Wake up, Marina!" cried Valeria, merrily calling the maids between, "time flies, my dear!"

But Marina was already awake and watching from a high window the procession forming at the imperial palace.

"Valeria," she said, "the keys are coming." Her companion sprang to her side, it was true.

"Silence!" whispered Marina, "let your veil and pallium be brought. I will wear them and go in your place!"

"O, Marina! dare you?"

"Dare! I glory in confronting him! Not to save *her*," she murmured, as Valeria went to see her orders obeyed; "only to snare her deeper ere Decius return!" The light step of Valeria returning with the garments silenced her, and assuming them, she descended as the practor, ediles and lords of the household entered.

"His majesty," said the smooth practor, "sends by his unworthy slaves, the keys of his household to the lady Valeria! May he hope that she will accept them?" and he extended the golden bunch. The veiled lady bowed, affixed them to her girdle, and passed out with them.

"I scarcely dreamed the lady Valeria of such stature," said Philip, as he watched her coming, and ere long she stood alone before him in the place where he had a month before, received Julia.

"And is my conquest," said Philip, exulting in his apparent success over Decius, "to remain always veiled before me? Suffer me to remove the folds that hide the ravishing beauty of Vitellius's daughter from my eyes." And lifting the veil, he threw it back over her head. The basilisk eyes of Marina pierced him, as she uttered a short laugh, and made a profound reverence.

"A month," she said, "makes a difference in my ravishing beauty!"

"In truth it does, Marina!" answered the emperor, recovering his self-possession, "and another month will work further wonders in my dungeons or my arenas."

"Thy wife torn by wild beasts?" echoed she, mockingly.

"How often shall I tell thee, thou art no wife?" he cried.

"But I am, and thy words cannot alter it!"

He stepped towards her, and lifting his arm, he struck her fiercely. She met the blow without a quiver, but her pale face shot forth paler sparkles of wrath, as she returned: "I expected it. It does not take much to strike a woman. But neither dungeons nor bolts can confine her who knows every secret path and lock in Rome! One thing more I came to tell thee. She is a Christian!" Philip staggered back aghast. "And now take her if thou darest!"

"Marina, thou omniscient—"

"Silence, blasphemer!"

The emperor turned away thoughtful a moment. "Ah," said he, at last, "that explains why Saturn Malevola was uppermost on the horoscopes last night. It could not divine. Tush, woman! What difference will it make? I am not supposed to know, and if it be discovered in the future, let her die! What carest thou?"

"Heartless wretch! I care only for revenge on thee. If thou persistest in taking her, I will proclaim her faith in the streets, ere she reach thy palace! She shall be rent in pieces before thy longing eyes!"

She seized his hand and wrung it violently; when she dropped it, unperceived by him, in the fervent pressure, his signet ring was no longer on his finger. Philip grasped her shoulder, and called loudly for his slaves.

"The western closet," said he, significantly, when they appeared, and taking the keys from her girdle. The western closet was a cell in the top of one of the vast columns that surrounded the upper gallery, and within it Marina was thrust and left. But artfully concealed, the emperor's signet ring was on her finger, ready to aid her at any moment.

Hardly daring to connect himself with a Christian, Philip remained alone, closely shut up for three days, watching his calculations, observing the stars, consulting black letter chronicles and never missing his signet. The fourth day he came out, once more determined.

"Decius has already been two days with the army,—I must hasten," said he, and a second time the procession of the keys entered the house of Vitellius. Valeria herself met them this time, serious and calm.

"I cannot accept the emperor's keys," she answered. "Bear back to your master my faithful assurances as a subject, but never as his wife!"

The astonished courtiers, suddenly enlightened on recent proceedings, turned away with mortified eyes, and carried her words to the emperor. Shortly after the noble guard returned, and bore her off by force of strength to the judgment hall of the practor Urbanus.

The elevated portion of the hall at the other extremity, where usually sat the practor, being most gorgeously draped, a separate dais beneath a sumptuous canopy was raised upon this. On the dais, Philip was regally enthroned; by his side stood Valeria's father; below them in his usual seat, the practor and the functionaries of the day filled up the intermediate spaces, as the maiden entered and stood plainly before them all.

"Lady," said the praetor, "you are here to answer an accusation of treason and disobedience to the royal command. Have you any defence?"

After the first moment's amazed shrinking, she looked clearly up, answering: "If what I have done is treason—none!"

"Let the witnesses be brought forward!"

A tedious time she stood alone without support, while a throng of servile courtiers only too gladly rehearsed the occurrences, commencing with the imposture of Marina, and adding original embellishments.

"And the prisoner has no defence?"

Valeria only shook her head.

"Pause, lady, ere sentence is pronounced!" exclaimed Philip; "accede even at this late hour to my request, and the empress of Philip will find no accusers?"

Valeria's lip curled in contempt, as she answered: "It were indeed gratifying to rule these wretches who were a moment since eager to betray me!"

"It were happiness!"

"I scorn such happiness!"

"By Venus! thou shalt not thus disregard me! Thou shalt be mine if every god in Olympus cried 'nay.' Thou shalt! eh?"

"I shall not," she answered, seeking her father's eye, which met hers as calmly as a stranger's. He had conquered himself—or more truly, the evil powers of superstition had conquered him, and perhaps there was a proud pleasure out of reach of the sting, in seeing his gentle child thus withstand the man before whom all Rome trembled.

"Give me," cried the irate Philip, "give me some reason."

She stepped forward, slightly extending her hands and gazing at him with clear hazel eyes.

"Sire," she said, "I am a Christian!"

A bolt from heaven seemed to have descended, transfixing spectator, guards, courtiers, practor, emperor and priest. Though the last two knew it before, totally confounded by her unexpected declaration, and their own sense of guilty participation in the knowledge, they seemed to be struck into stone, and dead silence filled the place.

"Thou liest!" at last roared the emperor; "it is false!"

"I can call witnesses if necessary, but my own confession is sufficient," she said. "Let my father confirm my words!"

They all turned with terrified aspects to Vitellius, who, pressing both hands upon his aching heart, and bowing his head, said: "It is true."

"And thou, Vitellius?" asked the practor.

"Am ready," returned the priest, "to offer her to the offended gods!"

A great cheer at the father's stoicism arose, while the steadfast smile on his daughter's face assured him of her undying love. The emperor bent forward to the practor.

"When are the games appointed?" he asked.

"For the ides of October."

"And it is now the kalends," mused Philip.

"They await the return of Decius with captives," added the practor.

"They must be earlier—much earlier," said the emperor. "I have well nigh lost my kingdom in a passion for this mad girl; and the populace must be appeased. Earlier, I tell you!"

"The gladiators are in training. If your majesty found prisoners, it might be two days previous."

"Very well. There are twenty already, and I will add another, winding up performances by the sacrifice of Valeria. That will do for one afternoon, with a play in the evening, I think!" And Philip rose to sentence the prisoner. "The lady Valeria has chosen her lot," he resumed. "At the next games she will be sacrificed by her father on an altar raised in the arena, to Venus!" And waving his hand, she was borne away to the dungeons.

Marina, those four days, had sat silently pondering in her cell, and when that night the curator brought her food, she displayed the signet ring and commanded him to free her. Astonished, the man examined the ring again and again; it was real; he dared not disobey, and suffered her to step down upon the gallery and leave him. It was no matter that it cost the poor fellow his life the next morning. Hastily crossing the well known ways, she entered the imperial sleeping-room. The emperor lay in profound oblivion. She bent over him. By a flame fed from a perfumed lamp, an instant a dagger gleamed in the air; another, and it had shrouded itself in flesh, while the blood of Philip spurted warmly into her face. A long, deep groan, and everything was still again, far stiller than before. Coolly wiping the dagger, "Not the first, thou shalt not be the last!" she said. "I hated thee always; now our accounts are squared!" And in the darkness of the night she glided away.

Her path lay by the Flavian Amphitheatre, and the signet ring still upon her finger, opened the way for her.

"I wish to feed the tigers!" she exclaimed; and the basket was put into her hand, the keepers accompanying her with torches. She entered the cage, throwing him the bits of meat one by one, till entirely gorged the beast refused more, and suffered her to stroke his tawny hide with her long, white fingers. For seven successive nights she repeated her visits to the amphitheatre, and in a few more the great games would come off; but secluded in the ruined Thermae all day, she heard nothing of the occurrences in the city.

"Valeria, at least, is done with! I will throw her dainty limbs to my tiger for a last meal, and then he may starve. And Philip! Philip is dead!" she murmured, exultingly. "I alone shall live to welcome Decius!"

Her path lay over the long since disused aqueducts. She was mistaken in the sound behind her, like the march of many feet! No, she turned and saw the corslets of a maniple of soldiers sparkling in the moonbeams. Stumbling in her haste she fell, knocking aside a stone, and found herself in the centre of a trembling band of Christians below assembled in that unfrequented place for their devotions.

"Escape!" she cried, trusting to find safety with them. "They are upon you!" But before the words were fully uttered, the tribune, followed by his soldiers, leaped in amid them. Resistance was useless.

"A good two score added to the games!" cried he with an oath, securing the prisoners.

"Ha! whom have we here? Lady?" he said, throwing the chains round Marina: "We have

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"Nor will thou!" answered she, while something like despair, neverthe
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above on the imperial cubiculum, l
himself on his elbow, better to gratify
revenge, waited as breathlessly as any.

The moment came. A gate was slo
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The edifice guard confounded at the

: the witnesses be brought forward !"
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hile a throng of servile courtiers only too
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ria only shook her head.
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most noble company for the beasts, yet I hardly dreamed of seeing an ex-empress devoured !"

" Nor wilt thou !" answered she, proudly, while something like despair, nevertheless, seemed to wrap her hitherto indomitable spirit; but they had been warned of her signet, and she disdained to disclaim Christianity. A few moments more and the old aqueducts rung to the departing steps, and subsided into primeval stillness, broken only by the distant sentry's cry. But hundreds of leagues away, there were other footfalls, to be counted only by thousands, steadily and tirelessly echoing through the Northern forests, and seeking Rome with one accord, after their adored chieftain who had so many times led them forth to victory. Scarcely halting for the briefest rest, and snatching their rations by morsels, they thundered on, for if Decius was too late, he had sworn to deliver them to the anger of Philip, and hurl his proffered crown in their faces. And far within and below the heart of the great city, Valeria sat alone in her cell, ignorant of the passage of time, apparently deserted by father, lover and friend; betrayed and wretched, yet humbly trusting in God and relying on his will.

* * * * *

The last day dawned, hailed by all the barbaric gala splendor of the Roman holiday. Half the population were in the streets, and thousands already bent their steps to the amphitheatre, to secure seats. The keepers were sprinkling the arena with fresh sand, and the distant growlings of the savage beasts, who had received no food for one or two days, elated the longing populace.

Morning deepened into noon ere the bolts of Valeria's dungeon were withdrawn, and the gaoler entered with her last meal. Setting the untouched viands aside :

" How long have I been here ?" she asked.

" This is the ninth day," he gruffly returned.

" The twenty-first since he left me then," she murmured. " There is yet hope. But no. I dare not think of it, I was resigned before." And turning to him, " Where is the army ?" she asked.

" Well, lady," he replied, " there *are* strange rumors that it is not far off, and that thus the games are hastened. But who knows ? Come, I have orders that you be taken to the bath !" And he led her up from the dungeon into the cool, fresh air, and left her among her own sobbing but well-guarded hand-maidens. A few hours later, and she lay dressed in fragrant white, her long, bright curls bound by the sacrificial fillets of white wool, on a couch where all the winds that blew might cool and quiet her ere she appeared to furnish a moment's amusement, not only for the mob, but for those lords who had sighed at her feet, and those ladies who had made her protestations of eternal friendship. Cruel the agonies of that tender soul, as each moment her ears were mocked with the shouts that would soon peal over her, and the suspense, and hope of rescue from Decius grew momentarily more terrible and faint; and not even to speak one word, to give one kiss to her father, before she died. Almost, she prayed that her swelling heart might break. The acclamations from the amphitheatre grew fainter and fainter, and showed that the people were fast becoming dissatisfied at the paltry show prepared for them, when the blood-soaked arena was covered with fresh sand, and the ediles proclaimed the speedy entrance of the Nubian lion and the Bengal tiger, kept for the last, prior to the sacrifice ; while a light altar was borne to the northern side, and a small, perfumed flame kindled upon it. All around, beneath, the arches of the dens yawned to let out their raging occupants, and the eager faces above were bent forward to watch the egress of the reserve. The emperor, pale, and by no means recovered from his recent swoon, lay above on the imperial cubiculum ; but raising himself on his elbow, better to gratify his fierce revenge, waited as breathlessly as any.

The moment came. A gate was slowly drawn aside, and a tall woman—in long, imperial robes, looped on the shoulder above each bare, white arm, by a golden shell; her jetty hair bound beneath a crown, and a small dagger hanging by her side—stepped proudly down. The air was rent with shouts of joy, showing how well pleased the people were indeed, at so gorgeous a phenomenon. Philip waved his hand for silence, then looking down upon the victim, he pointed to his own wound, bowed and smiled.

" Thy Christian faith," said he, mockingly, in tones low, but distinctly heard through that vast space, " teaches thee peaceful deeds !"

The consternation of Marina on seeing Philip alive, whom she had, as she believed, herself slain, was instantly succeeded by a coolness equal to his own, while the red, so long banished from her cheek, once more enriched it.

" Philip knows," answered she, clearly, " how much his wife holds to a Christian creed ; but false though her accusation be, do not let him think she quails ! for as truly as I believe in the immortal gods, so would I never accept life from thee, thou craven ! My revenge is complete."

If she would have said more, it was lost, for with a gesture from the emperor, the gates of two different cells, widely apart, flew open, and goaded by the tumult of the spectators, the two fearful beasts dashed into the ring with a yell, circling round and round, and lashing the sand with their tails. More erect than ever, Marina turned and followed them with her eye. The tiger, his eyes like great coals of fire, glowing in his head, gained on his adversary, and came nearer her in the swift circles. Suddenly the scent must have touched him as familiar, for leaping forward in a straight line, he knelt down licking her feet; it was evident that he remembered the bountiful feeder of so many nights, while crouching close beside her. But the lion—shaking his tawny, bristling mane, with his red jaws hanging wide, and his eyes sparkling beneath their fringes—paused, growling low, then reared, and with a terrific roar sprang upon her. The long, white arm was extended, with the dagger at its end, and as the beast bounded, received him on its point and sheathed the dagger to the hilt, in his heart. The roar changed into a snarl, and the Nubian lion fell backward, dead. The ediles gazed confounded at the throng, to see what should now be done. Charmed for once from their brutal teachings, to the nature of human beings, every thumb pointed downwards, signifying life and favor, but planting her foot on the dead lion with the tiger still crouching beside her, Marina curled her lip in defiant scorn.

" A queen," she cried, " in the depths of Asia, gave me life ! And do you think I would a second time receive it from a Roman Pleb ? *No !*" and glancing like lightning, she buried the dagger in her own bosom.

Yells of execration burst from the thronging benches, increased by the confused tramp of a million without ; just as, to appease the multitude, the massive slides were removed, and Vitellius, stern as fate, and armed with the sacrificial knife, stood in full sight, while opposite, stepping cautiously down with pondrous feet, an enormous snow-white elephant slowly entered, bearing upon his back a flat car, like a broad, crimson leaf, with slightly curled edges, in which half-lay the beautiful white-robed sacrifice. Raising his trunk, and entwining it round the leaf, he lifted it gently to the ground, and stationed himself beside it.

* * * * *

The murmuring outside the amphitheatre swelled in a vast volume, mingling with the exultation within, at this last spectacle; and with loud blasts of the trumpet, and neighing of steeds, while trampling down the few unwilling guards, a cohort of horsemen dashed within the place, and drew up at the northern side of the arena, around the altar.

Philip sprang to his feet with an oath, calling on his guards, and vehemently cursing their treachery.

The leader of the cohort rode out alone to the centre.

" I told theo, Philip !" cried Decius, " that I came back imperator. Behold ! my conquering legions are within the walls. Your senate hails me, and your people proclaim me !"

" Balked ! Balked !" groaned Philip, tearing the bandage from his wound, and thrusting his hands in the half-closed seam, till the blood gushed out and covered his royal robes, while he fell exhausted and dying in the very place where he had prepared death for tens of thousands. But Valeria's eye wandering round, had fallen, long since, on Marina, and springing from her car, she lifted the crowned head, and was completely absorbed in vainly seeking to staunch the blood.

" And that woman," muttered Vitellius, " would have slain her, and yet she strives to bring *her* back to life !"

" Surely, surely, Vitellius !" cried Decius, catching the expression of the priest's face, " a religion that makes us like that, a religion that is worth dying for, is worth living for ! Decius, your emperor is a Christian ! Hearken, all ye good people ! Let the place be cleared, and come forth into the street. Bear that dead king to his solitude."

Awed and admiring, the populace obeyed, till Decius remained alone with Valeria and Vitellius in the arena. He dismounted and stood beside her. With a sigh she relinquished her efforts to restore Marina, and turning quickly sprang to his arms.

" Saved ! Saved !" she murmured. " By you, my love ! I could not have borne it from any one else !"

" Our prayers have been heard, my darling ! Another moment had been death. Vitellius, would you really—"

" I should have slain myself afterwards !" returned the priest. " Can a faith that requires such deeds of a father be of any worth ? Nay. Vitellius will forget it, and learn of his child the elements of a new manner of life !"

Still holding Valeria in his arms, Decius remounted and rode forth to meet his shouting subjects.

Philip the Arabian had been entombed several days, when the great triumph of Decius took place. Chariots laden with gold and ivory ; tablets heaped with jewels ; gigantic Goths from Northern wildernesses, leading huge, wonderful beasts, fresh from the jungles of India ; kings walking in captive chains, and thirty crowns, borne by swarthy Africans, preceded him, gay as the perpetual carving of a Bacchanalian frieze. Vain were it to mention the wealth and splendor of that unsurpassed pageant; and equally vain to picture the beauty and joy of the Empress Valeria, enthroned beside the all-conquering Decius, with the golden keys of another household hanging at her girdle !

THE COUNTRY MESSENGER.

Mr. Hall's " Swift and the Messenger " is the cleverest picture in the rooms of the British Institution just opened. Apart from some landscapes and a few " old masterish " portrait studies, it is almost the only picture out of five hundred and forty-three that contains an original thought. The story is that of a country boy who brings Dean Swift a present from his master. Not afraid of epigrams, and quite indifferent to satire, the rough lad breaks into the room, flings the hares with a hasty whack on the floor, and without bow or benediction, shouts out :

" I've brought these ere hares."

The dean likes plainness and is amused. He resolves to teach the rustic manners.

" Come you here, sir," says he, with a stealthy voice ; " come and sit in my chair, and when I knock at the door, say ' come in !' "

The poet goes out, and presently enters with his hat off and bowing, delivers a polite message, requesting the dean's acceptance of the game.

" Now, my boy," he says, " what would you say ?"

" Why," said the boy, thrusting his hand in his pocket. " I should say, ' here, my good lad, here's half a crown for you !"

This is the artist's point. The dean is still bending ; the boy, half shy, half cunning, is rolling uneasily in the chair, and presenting an imaginary half-crown.—*Savannah Republican.*

CONFESSING OUR FAULTS.

A lively writer has said, ' I was mistaken,' are the three hardest words to pronounce in the English language. Yet it seems but acknowledging we are wiser than we were before to see our error, and humbler than we were before to own it. But so it is ; and Goldsmith observes, that Frederick the Great did himself more honor, by his letter to his senate, stating he had just lost a great battle by his own fault, than all the victories he had won. Perhaps our greater perfection here is not to escape the imperfections, but to acknowledge and lament them.—*Jay.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THAT SEMI-ANNUAL ACCOUNT.

BY MRS. E. WELLMONT.

To have a bill thrust in our hands which we were not conscious of owing, generally makes a man savage to more than one. In the first place, he wonders at the audacity of the collector who presents it ; and in the next place, he vents his indignation upon the contractor. The poor misguided wife, who in an evil hour was decoyed by the flattering vender of silks and gossamer and laces to " open an account " with the feeling that a thousand unforeseen occurrences may make the payment easy before a whole half year has passed away, and who feels the absolute importance of dressing her children as other young ladies are clothed, thinking thereby somebody's attention may be caught by the " fine feathers," and well knowing it will save a perpetual teasing for the articles she has just purchased, puts off the pay-day without many sleepless nights until she is amazed that July has come along so suddenly.

That fierce ring at the door has been answered by herself, and Mr. Tasewell only cast a furtive glance towards her, as she took the yellow envelope and immediately proceeded up stairs. He then cast his eyes again towards his newspaper, but not to read it. Mrs. Tasewell is his second wife. He has been very well satisfied with his connection with *her*, but those unfortunate daughters that he married too, he did not covenant to support, and but for these, his home would be a happy one. He is sometimes a little jealous at the private manœuvring which is carried on in the spare chamber ; he has seen splendid dresses slipped suddenly into the wardrobe just as he entered the room, and he has been puzzled to know how his wife expended all her pin money. The young ladies have been teachers in private families, but since their mother married into so " good a home," one of them has become delicate and cannot bear the drudgery, while the other is waiting a chance to go south, where salaries are more remunerative.

Poor Mr. Tasewell ! He had no children by his first wife, and the very thought that everywhere and in all places he is for the first time called " father," now he is past his prime, always makes him uneasy. It seems to him the appellation was never so freely used by any family toward the genuine parent. And then they are so affectionate ! Just as he was playing the rubber game with his old bachelor friend, Mr. Pitt, the other evening, Miss Sophronia approached him and accompanied her good night with such a violent kiss, that it made the old gentleman really inquire " what's trumps ?"

Sometimes Mr. Tasewell sits and muses why he got married the second time ; but then he calls to mind the necessary appendage of a wife who is interested to save his effects from destruction, and he remembers what losses he encountered during his six months' widowship, when all his drawers were left empty by that " well recommended housekeeper," who complained with two servants to help her along, and how fast groceries seemed to evaporate—sugar and butter disappearing strangely, the bag of coffee lightened very perceptibly in a week's time, and the chest of tea diminished full one half—besides the running account over the way being double that of any previous months in housekeeping. And then when he told his trials to his intimate friends, the reply always came : " Well, you *must* get you a good wife to superintend these things !"

Now Mr. Tasewell had a mortal aversion to making love or following the course of a long courtship. When he decided whom to marry, he should do so, and his friends all corresponded in recommending the widow Elsie Tufts as a suitable person for number two. The widow had not much property—a small farm upon which was a house, a barn and a vegetable garden ; the rest was neither tillage, pasturage nor mowing land, simply because it was all run out.

Mr. Tasewell was a retired city grocer. He had failed twice in his life, but closed up with honorable discharges, and was now reckoned by the assessors to be worth about thirty thousand, although he paid taxes for but fifteen of it. But what he called his own, he always felt a disposition to keep ; he never expected that the Tufts children in speaking of his property, would call it " ours." Still, as he must have a wife for reasons assigned, he called upon the widow and inquired of her how she should like to live near the great city.

She did not hesitate long, but she wiped the corner of one eye, and spoke of " poor Mr. Tufts as having been such a good husband, that it would require an indulgent person to fill his place. Still, it was so difficult for a widow to manage her affairs alone, and everybody took advantage of ladies in her position, yet she must say "—and she stammered a little here—" that —she—had a proposition already under consideration, but—" and here she ended.

Mr. Tasewell went back and thought it all over at home. The widow Tufts was well looking, of a fair reputation, had no incumbrances, as her children supported themselves and paid their board when at home ; she could let her farm for enough for her own pocket money, and with her stock of housekeeping articles, added to those which remained to him, he thought on the whole the next Sabbath he would spend with her.

Mr. Tasewell was no beau. He dressed just above being shabby, and never owed a tailor's bill in his life ; but now before starting on this expedition, he appeared in a new suit, and being well cropped and trimmed and dyed at the barber's, he really was a well conditioned man. But still he knew not his competitor, and in fact never did. In one fortnight from that time, there was no widow Tufts. The young ladies at once fell into the habit of calling " father," and they were so fond of him that all at once they both took a vacation which seemed not likely to terminate.

Mr. Tasewell was in the third year of his second marriage. The daughters had two successive seasons carried him to watering places, and now a journey to the White Hills was projected ; and just as it was about being consummated, the unlucky semi-annual bill was presented for payment. This incident gave Mrs. Tasewell a fit of the blues, which for want of knowing the cause of the disease, the step-father interpreted as a letter from some old lover whose position was so eligible that he was wont to tease one who refused him. Surely Mr. Tasewell was a very jealous man ! Yet the more he pondered, the more certain grew the fact. He refused to take the journey ; he grew sullen and morose, sat much alone, was gone nearly all day, and was dispirited when he returned. His wife, too, saw the improbability of being able to pay the bill which so vexed her, and the collector had called for the third time.

The daughters were aroused by this state of things again to return to their old avocations, and discharge the debt which was incurred solely on their account. The event proved so happy in its termination, that we were induced to tell the story for the benefit of any who may have settled upon their step-fathers without an invitation, merely to become " pets." Long before the bill was paid, Mrs. Tasewell had relieved her husband of his jealousy by informing him of the cause of her unhappiness, and it is needless to add that the step-father at once liquidated the debt, assuming the young ladies for his paymasters. The old couple now walk, ride, chat and enjoy each other's society with the greatest freedom ; the girls are welcomed home to spend their vacations, but they will never fail to remember that their father married the widow Tufts, and *not her two daughters.*

This remembrance is likely to operate well for them. In one of those hot days when nearly all business is suspended, Mr. Tasewell called upon his attorney to draft his will from dictation. The legal gentleman being a bachelor, has since become introduced to Miss Sophronia, and we may as well close by adding, " straws tell which way the wind blows."

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

Scrap from the Note Book of Laurie Todd.

BY GRANT THORBURN.

THE City Hotel in Broadway was built in 1794. It was the first respectable establishment of the kind erected in New York, and it was the first house whose roof was covered with slates in America. In the beginning of November, the roof was raised and ready to nail down the slates, but no slate nails could be found in the city. They sent to Philadelphia and Baltimore with no better success, slates never having been used in America. The hardwaremen knew not the use of a slate nail. The master builder heard there was a Scotchman making nails in Liberty Street.

" Now," says he, " I'll get the nails, for in Scotland they cover the roofs of the stables and barns with slates."

He called at my shop.

" Can you make slate nails ?"

" I can," I replied.

" What will you charge for making a thousand, I finding iron and coal ?"

" Call at ten to-morrow," says I, " and I'll let you know."

Observe : I was born in a cottage on the Muir. My father was a conscientious covenanter. He told his children to do to their neighbor as they would wish their neighbor to do to them, and never to take advantage of our neighbor's necessity.

" Now," says I to myself, " these people are in my power. They must have the nails ; winter is setting in—the roof must be closed. But it's not fair to take advantage of their necessity."

I reasoned with myself, whether to charge a dollar or ninety-four cents for making a thousand. I finally fixed my own price at ninety-four cents for making a thousand. I soon found I had sinned on the wrong side of the commandment ; I was loving my neighbor *better* than myself.

Now, look at this piece of model simplicity. Perhaps at that time I was the only man in America that could make a slate nail. The head is of a peculiar construction, and can only be forged by nailmakers in Europe, where slates are in general use. Cut nails at that time had not put themselves into public favor. We had several wrought nail-factories in New York for floor and shingle nails, but none of the workmen had ever seen a slate nail.

I smile now, when I think of my own simplicity. They told me to set my own price ; had I charged two dollars a thousand, they would have paid it willingly, and this would have been no more than a fair compensation. One thousand was a good day's work. A man mixing mortar was paid one dollar for ten hours' labor. And I, who served seven years to learn this craft, set my own price for ten hours' labor at ninety-four cents ! I was now catched then. I could only read the Bible and write my own name. I had never been twenty miles from my father's door till I sailed for America, and with regard to men and their manners, I was ignorant as a child. The Death of Cock Robin, the Catechism, the Bible, the Pilgrim, and Robinson Crusoe, were my whole stock in that trade. I soon found in New York that the politician and lawgiver, the minister, doctor, coffin-maker and grave-digger, all had their price. So I resolved to have my price also.

Accordingly, in 1802, when I commenced the sale of pumpkin, squash, and Cobbett's Ruta Bega seed, geraniums, myrtles and monthly roses, I resolved to charge where folly led. For instance, when one of the whiskered, goat-bearded fraternity entered, having more money in his purse than brains in his head (I knew such at once by the cut of their jib) :

" Thorburn," says he, " I am going to the theatre to-night ; I want the best bouquet you can make to throw on the stage for Madame Pimpernelli," or some other French nymph.

" Five dollars, prepaid," said I.

In summing up before a court of conscience, when I found I had charged a fool with a price in his hand a dollar too much, I always paid the overplus to a poor widow having orphans. I thought it more honorable, more rational, and more in accordance with common sense, to feed American widows than to feed French or English trollopes.

ANECDOTES OF ANIMALS.

The popular story of " Whittington and his Cat " has probably some foundation in fact, although there is just reason to believe that the famous Lord Mayor of London was not indebted to one of the feline race for the foundation of his fortunes. The same story is common in Persia, and it seems exceedingly likely, that not one person only, but many persons, have found a cat a very useful investment in trading to remote islands. Rats and mice abound in every part of the world, but, originally, cats were only to be obtained in particular countries. There are records to prove the scarcity of this useful animal, both in England and in Wales, and the high prices for which they are sold—the price of a kitten being a penny, and that of a cat, after it had evinced its destructive powers by killing a mouse, twopence. At this day, a female cat is not permitted to be taken off the Island of St. Helena, and at the first occupation of the Island of Ascension, cats were the most acceptable gifts that the colonists could receive. The prolificness of the cat, though beneficial to man, is disadvantageous to itself; for if the species were more scarce, it would enjoy a much higher degree of favor. The extreme beauty of the animal, its natural grace and extraordinary sagacity, are not very highly appreciated, since the object possessing these advantages has become so common as almost to degenerate into a nuisance. In Ascension, cats, having been allowed to go wild, have now increased to such an extent, as to be nearly as great a pest as the rats ; while keeping down the superabundance of vermin, they destroy the eggs and the young of those numerous birds which formerly might be taken in any quantity by the crews of vessels touching at the island. Cats have either not thriven so well in St. Helena, or care has been taken to keep them in a more domesticated state, for the rats are there spoken of as being the grand destroyers of game.—*Buffalo Express.*

AN EFFECTIVE SPEECH.

An itinerant player, possessed of more wit than money, was, a few days ago, driven by the hard master, hunger, to commit the high crime of poaching, in the neighborhood of Birmingham, and, being unluckily detected in the act, was carried forthwith before a bench of magistrates, when the offence was fully proved. The knight of the buskin, however, being called upon for his defence, astonished the learned justices by adapting Brutus's speech to the Romans on the death of Cæsar to his captious :—" Britons, hungry men and epigrammatic, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear ; believe me for mine honor, that you may believe ; censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any friend of this hare, to him I say, that a player's love for hare is no less than his. If then that friend demand why a player rose against a hare, this is my answer :—not that I love hare less, but that I loved eating more. Had you rather this hare were living, and I had died starving, than that this hare was dead, that I might live a jolly fellow ? As this hare was pretty, I wept for him ; as he was nimble, I rejoice at it ; as he was plump, I honor him ; but as he was eatable, I slew him." Here the gravity of the court was obliged to give way ; prosecutors, spectators and all burst into laughter at the ready wit displayed by the poor actor. The information was withdrawn, and the player was suffered to go " unwhipt of justice."—*English paper.*

TRY AGAIN.

Who ever forgets the notable example of perseverance taught by the spider to Robert Bruce, in the Highlands of Scotland. He had been defeated by the English armies—his forces scattered—his friends discouraged—and himself a hunted fugitive. One morning, hidden in a highland cabin, he noticed a spider on the ceiling attempting to swing himself from one rafter to another, in order to secure the web he was spinning—a trap for the fly and a home for himself. Seven times in vain, the spider sought to fasten his thread. This is the same number of times, mused Robert Bruce, that I have attempted to free Scotland from English rule, and if he succeeds in the next endeavor, I shall deem it an omen for good. The creature made another effort, and fixed his thread. This gave Bruce courage to try again. He did so, and rescued his country from chains and slavery. Then never despair.

Try again should be the motto of every young man. Try again is the resolution which every true heart feels, whenever it has failed in its hopes, or found disaster instead of success. If you are right, try again. If you have lost money, fairly earned, by other's failure or treachery, try again. It costs no courage to be brave when there is nothing to fear. Be brave when things go wrong, and the stress of life bears upon your weary heart; TRY AGAIN.—*Washington Union.*

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[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

TO LITTLE ELLA.

BY ELIAN LEE.

Laughter-lovin' little Ella,
Gentle, playful frank and kind,
Unto thee are kindly given
Beauties both of form and mind.

Smooth and fair thy soft round cheek,
Rich thy dark eyes' lustrous glow;
While thy braids of shining hair
Fall around thy neck of snow.

Oft thy white arms round my neck
All lovingly are thrown;
And oft thy little rosy cheek
Is pressed unto my own.

There's music in thy whispered tones,
And in thy shouts of glee;
And the pattering of thy busy feet
Is music sweet to me.

May God protect and guide thee ever,
My darling little one'
And shield thee from the blight of sin,
Till thy last setting sun!

Then gently when 'tis thine to die,
And life's last throb is given,
May thy pure spirit pass away,
To rest for aye in heaven.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

EVELYN ARMITAGE.

BY ALICE C BENTON.

I MET Evelyn Armitage at Madam Lombard's school. She was my first friend in that dreary establishment—my first and only companion in that unutterably hard bed. She sat beside me as I ate the dry and heavy slice of bread, spread with butter of unmistakable strength; and together we sipped the muddy and almost milkless beverage which they called coffee. Together we mourned over the toughness and hardness, the scantiness and shabbiness which madam contrived to mingle with every portion of our daily fare. Together we recalled, with the keen appetite of growing youth, the delicious compounds of our home cookery.

Let me describe this beautiful Evelyn. It was her fifteenth birthday when I arrived She was not very tall, but there was a perfect fullness of figure, such as is rarely seen in girls of that age. Her face had a radiant fairness, a sort of glittering white unlike the chalky cheeks of which there was a profusion in the school. Blended with this, was the slightest perceptible roseate hue; but the lips were crimsoned deeply. Eyes of that soft, velvety black, as far removed from that class of eyes usually called brilliant, as they were from those called tame and expressionless. No pen can describe those eyes—no artist could paint them. Like her glorious hair, the peculiar shade of color could never be identified. It was indescribable. Hands and arms of the most exquisite moulding and color, and feet just of that peculiar adaptation of size to the rest of the person, were hers in perfection. Her manner of carrying her head, that small and faultless head, set so beautifully upon the slender neck, was not less observable.

All these things I saw, for I was a worshipper of beauty in all its forms. One thing I did not see, until it was forced upon me by long suffering. It was that, under this beautiful exterior, there was an icy coldness, that arose from her deep, unconquerable *pride*. This was her besetting sin. Vashti herself never queened it more statelily than this youthful school girl. Her whole bearing was superb.

How I loved her! It was as if I had a lover, my devotion was so deep, so earnest. It was that sort of love which is the type and the prophecy of the heart's future devotion. She received my love as though it were her due, but she took small pains to return it. I was jealous of any rival in her affections, and when she bestowed her smiles upon Catherine Moore or Sybil Ackerman, I reproached her bitterly. Her calm, unmoved way of taking this irritated and maddened me. She was not to be scolded or reproved. She was impenetrable as ice; nay, she was ice itself. I do not now know how I came to love one so unimpressible, when my own nature was so fiery, except on the principle of attracting opposites.

With all this ice, however, there was a certain inner temple in her heart, to which this column of ice helped to form the pillars of the vestibule—a sanctum, kept for some presiding deity, who should come in the aspect of a lover, and dwell there forever. Evelyn could love but once, and that would be always.

In her school exercises Evelyn was always perfect. Her coolness and self-possession were invaluable to a student; and her pride never permitted her to allow any one to distance her in the pursuit of knowledge. She was thorough, real, practical. Once learned, her lesson was always hers. She could not transfer nor forget it. She could not commit a lesson so quick as I could, but when hers was fixed immutably in her mind, mine was scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Evelyn had no imagination. She read page after page of the most burning poetry with perfect coolness; and even would criticise the rhythm or the sentiments, when others were thrilling with the glorious inspiration they brought from the hearts that conceived them.

Glorious, radiant, beautiful Evelyn Armitage! How many times have I heard her called by these names. How many times have I heard her called proud! But never did I hear her called gentle, tender, or sensitive. I, who loved her so fondly, never gave her these names.

I had supposed, from the number and quality of Evelyn's dresses, that she must be the daughter of a rich man. Her imperial taste selected the richest of material, the most faultless of fashionable shape for her garments; and she wore them as a queen her coronation robes. She did not love jewels. Her own superb beauty needed them not. Nor did she affect the simple decoration of flowers. She loved best to array herself in a single dark, rich dress, and to dress her magnificent hair in large bands and braids, simply around her head. If a loving hand laid a splendid flower amidst the braids, she would allow it to remain; but never was one there by her own wish We passed one year together We were of the same age, in the same class; we left school together, and together we travelled towards home

Not until we neared the town where I was to be left, did she tell me that she too was an inhabitant of the same town. She had hitherto concealed it because her father was only a mechanic! *Only* a mechanic! Only one of those whom the world could not do without, while it would dispense gladly with hundreds of the useless and miserable *gentlemen* whose presence is so unwished for and so unsought!

False pride (Evelyn had some true pride too) prevented her from avowing this mortifying circumstance. During the year at school, she had been especially careful not to associate with the daughters of any but the wealthiest and most fashionable, and even to them, she had maintained an air of quiet but conscious superiority. But each one supposed that her circumstances warranted it, and they gave way to the influence which she silently exerted over them.

Soon after our return from school, we exchanged calls, and then my intercourse with Evelyn ceased. I still loved her—still thought her the most beautiful of beings—but some troubles arose in her family of a nature so unpleasant as to preclude my visiting there, and I saw her no more.

Not long after this, I heard she was married, and had gone to New Jersey. I asked to whom, and received for answer the name of one whom I well knew, but who, of all beings, was the most unfit to be the husband of Evelyn Armitage. Indolent, unattractive, careless of exterior refinement, I could not conceive of any one more unsuited to the fastidious, sensitive taste that she had ever exhibited. I wept that night, for the life to which she must awake, when the temporary delusion should be over. And yet, I had not imagined the half.

Pleasure-loving people are sometimes at a loss how to invest their time so as to cover the largest ground of enjoyment. Travelling offers the strongest inducements in the way of variety; and, nine years after I left school, still unencumbered by lover or husband, I joined a party of these same pleasure lovers, whose route of travel was to lie just where inclination might lead. It was delightful to be in this perfect freedom; not to have friends at home waiting for letters to tell them the exact day on which we should reach certain destinations. We were to turn aside wherever we saw a prospect of enjoyment by so doing.

It was delicious summer weather, our party were in the highest spirits, our travelling costumes in the best order, and we were on good terms with each other. What more could we ask? It was a season long to be remembered, and it dwells on my memory yet, with a richness and raciness that time has not been able to diminish.

If M—— still lives to read this, will he not remember, in his dwelling far away towards the setting sun, the day in which we two left the lagging travellers behind, and rode forward to secure a resting place for us all in that embowered farm-house? Will he not remember that avenue, where the trees met in a long unbroken arch above our heads, and the cool springs that bubbled up by the wayside, the perfume of sweet brier in the greenwood, and the delicious pocry which flowed from his lips?

Perhaps to him it is all a blank. Farms, the rise and fall of stocks, monetary affairs, the cares of wife and children and servants may have banished from the memory of the man the fresh and glowing happiness of the youth; but to me, who have wandered on in single blessedness, a poor, solitary old maid, the remembrance of such hours comes back to me "like the green spots that bloom o'er the desert of life."

On our way, we passed a poor, shabby, unfinished frame house, standing very desolately in the midst of a small cleared space. It was the first house we had seen for an hour's riding, and it had altogether an unprepossessing, nay, a repulsive appearance. Loose boards hung here and there, the yard was in bad condition, and everything betokened poverty and indolence. Two or three children, one a mere infant, were playing by the roadside, and the eldest, a little ragged boy, but with a face beautiful as an infant Guido, ran directly before my companion's horse, and fell. The horse merely touched him with his fore foot, as he fell, and then stood perfectly still, while M—— dismounted and took up the child. It was not hurt, but frightened; and fastening the horses to a tree, we carried the little one into the house.

A woman stood at a table, performing some household duty, with her back towards us. She evidently had not witnessed the accident. As we entered, she looked round. Even in the midst of surroundings so opposite to what I had ever seen her before, it was impossible to mistake that face for any other; and yet, had my life depended on the words, I could not have addressed her by her name. It was Evelyn Armitage, but so altered that, except for the glorious eyes, and soft, beautiful hair, I should never have known her. Exposure to the sun and wind had roughened and darkened that *glittering*, satin skin; sorrow, perhaps *want*, had sharpened the once rounded outline of form and face; but in the eye there was the same majestic look of superiority which here, in this solitary place, and under such circumstances, would have struck me in any one else as simply ludicrous; but in Evelyn it was innate, and could not be altered or affected by any mere outward surrounding.

Beautiful she was still—proud she was still—and I thought so then, in the brief moment in which my friend was explaining to her the slight accident which had so frightened her child. She was courteous enough, but it was evident that she was restive under our eyes; and not wishing to prolong an interview so painful, we departed. I do not know to this day, if she recognized me, but I believe she did. Pride would prevent her, indisputably, from making the first recognition, but *I* had not changed, and she must have known me. The children were lovely. The boy was beautiful as an angel—and yet she showed no affection for them, even when the frightened child was brought in, apparently hurt. The old ice had not melted.

For the next two miles I wept unceasingly. M—— left me to cry to my heart's content, before he asked a question. Then, when I had become quiet, I related to him the history of this glorious creature. He was intensely interested, for he had known her husband many years before.

"Yes; Theodore Grainger was well known to me, and still better known to my brother. We liked his amiable disposition, but we had a great contempt for his indolent, unthrifty ways. He was a gourmand and epicure; but he would not lift his hand even to procure luxuries for himself. He was just the being who would cause a proud wife to bury herself from all the rest of the world. If she could be contented with his affectionate manner towards her, she would not, perhaps, kill herself, but if she was passionate and exacting, there must be some terrible hours for her."

As M—— and myself rode on, we talked long and freely of Evelyn's besetting sin; and I related to him many circumstances of her early youth, at Madame Lombard's school. Her youth! why Evelyn was yet but twenty-six years old, and age had come upon her with its blight already, or else she had become "older than age, with sorrow."

It was a sad drawback to the gaiety I had promised myself for the next three or four weeks—this little episode of Evelyn's:—but I strove to forget it. Evelyn had chosen her path, why should I mourn her mistakes? So I became as selfish and as gay as pleasure-seekers generally are.

If I live to be a hundred years old, I shall never forget that season. It gave me an idea of what life might be if people would but lay aside their senseless devotion to fashion and folly, and dwell with simple nature, "who never *did* betray the heart that loved her." It initiated me into a thought of what paradise must have been before the bitter tree of knowledge had given its fruit to the lips of our first parents. M——, you will read this when you are sitting by that clear spring which you say bubbles up so sweetly by the green bower where you can overlook the broad prairie; "you will read and remember and understand!"

Ten years after this happy year of my life found me a helpless invalid, weary of life, heartbroken at the loss of parents, sisters and other dear friends. I felt myself a stray waif on the ocean of life, which it would be well for the billows to roll into the abyss below. Useless, useless was my thought from morning until night, and often through the dark and dreary hours too, I would lie awake and think how utterly vain was my living at all.

It was when the sweet, dewy June came, with its wealth of roses, its pure refreshing airs, and its thousand melodies, my best of friends, Kate Dalrymple burst into my chamber one morning, and with a voice as cheerful as a lark's, she bade me rise and shake off my illness and dejection, and let her pack my trunks for a journey, with herself and her husband. It was like an electric shock, but I submitted, too weak for resistance.

"But what shall I wear, Kate? I have nothing but morning wrappers."

"Look here," said she, and she pointed to a basket of clothes, which her servant was bringing in, with two complete travelling dresses, and everything requisite for a long journey.

"O, Kate!" I began, but she stopped me.

"We start at half-past one," she said, "so let Nanny and me get you all ready now, and then you can lie down again until I call you."

Under her gentle hands, I was soon equipped. A handsome, fashionable habit, yet made loosely, as it should be for a invalid, everything in good taste, yet easy fitting, so as not to annoy or distress me, bore witness to her careful and thoughtful love.

At half past one the carriage came. It was an open one, and Charles Dalrymple was to drive, while his wife occupied the seat beside him, and the ample back seat was reserved for myself and Kate's sister, a cheerful, happy girl, who had often cheered my sick room with her joyful laughter.

"Drive slowly, at first, Charlie," said Kate, as we started, "Fanny will soon get used to the motion." I did so—and every mile that we passed I became refreshed and invigorated. We made short stages; and by the time that we reached our longest destination, I was a new being. Change of air, different scenes, beheld under the delicious blue sky of summer, and the heart-felt kindness that prompted the excursion for my sake, all did their part, and I felt myself re-created. I could not realize, at the end of a fortnight, that I had lain on a sick bed so long, thanks to the kindly love of my companions, who consulted my wishes in all things pertaining to our journey.

We were on the sea coast now. The weather had become warmer in the inland towns, where we first went, and the breeze from ocean drew us to its side. O, how sweet were those hours, passed on that beautiful beach! How delicious the shadow of that mighty rock, under which we sat and inhaled the sea-breeze! How well Kate and Jennie looked in their pretty bathing dresses and straw hats, when they ran across the beach to plunge into the waves; and how *gaily* they looked when they came out, with their wet, limp skirts clinging to their slight figures, and their hats heavy with water!

Among the innumerable children whose little feet paced the sands daily, I had always noticed a beautiful boy, of perhaps thirteen or fourteen years old, who seemed to shun the rest, and who walked, generally, apart by himself. His face recalled another, but whose I could not remember. He was always accompanied by a lady in deep mourning, who wore her veil down. As I did not bathe, I had leisure to observe others; and this group interested me much. The lady was usually left alone, for the boy walked, as I said, mostly by himself, and one day I spoke to her upon the beauty of the sea, which was then calm and serene in its summer stillness. Her voice startled me, it was so like one that seemed to come up to me from the very depths of my memory.

Just then, the boy, whom she called Reginald, came up, and one look at his eyes brought the whole before me.

"*Is* it you, Evelyn?" I said, forgetting that in our last interview I had not spoken to her.

"It is Evelyn," she said, mournfully. "I have known you every day, Fanny, but I could not bear to reveal myself to your remembrance. I wished you to speak first."

We talked together long and earnestly, and for several succeeding days we sat under the shadow of the rock, and she told me all her trials. Her pride had been brought down so low—she was so subdued now. Her husband had continued his idle and miserable habits, until she was obliged to support him entirely. They had lived where I had last seen them, until she could no longer endure it. By a great effort she succeeded in inducing him to remove, and to take up his abode in the city. Here her two youngest children died. She pressed down the tears that welled up from her maternal heart, and tried to thank God that they were taken away.

Her husband had some talent, and she besought him to write, encouraged him in his feeble efforts, and after all, she, who, at school, would never (if possible to get clear of the task) so much as answer a letter, now wrote for bread. She took the pictures out of her own heart, and the scenes she drew were too touching and natural not to charm. O, ministry of sorrow, what beauty of thought and expression is thine!

After a while, he fell sick, and then she had suffered still more intensely. His selfishness, his querulous repinings, his exacting temper—she touched lightly on these—but I saw them all, running, like a dark thread, through her narrative, and shadowing her face with a deeper grief than that even for which we mourn the good.

"Had it not been for Reginald," she said, looking at the boy, as he stood on the beach, with an expression of such unutterable love as I could hardly think it possible for Evelyn to feel, "had it not been for that beloved child, I must have sunk under my trials. His love, and my remaining pride kept me up."

I looked at the boy. What a glorious creature he was, as he stood there, with the slight breeze lifting his hair from a brow such as I had never seen before. I did not wonder at her love and pride now.

After her husband died, she had met with a relative of her own, who had been absent several years in India. He threw himself upon her cares, for he was a sad invalid; and he rewarded them by leaving her his worldly store. She had placed Reginald already at college, and was looking forward to his future with a hope that seemed likely to be realized. I parted from her with half my old love and reverence for her renewed. She had proved herself worthy of it.

I sometimes hear from her now. She and Reginald are all the world to each other. He is all that she could wish; and he thinks that his mother is an angel. Their beautiful devotion to each other is the theme of all who know them. Evelyn's sunset seems to be drawing onward without a cloud.

INTELLIGENT CRITICISM.

A friend narrates the following anecdote, illustrative of the fact that fine feathers do not always indicate knowing birds. Our friend was a passenger on a train of cars from the west. At a station some forty miles from here, two young men came on board, whose highly dressed appearance at once attracted attention. They were most elaborately made up, their hair exhaled pleasant odors, their dainty shirt fronts exhibited sparkling studs, and altogether they reminded the bachelor of the lilies of the valley mentioned by Solomon, for toilers they certainly were not, but mere enjoyers of the fruits of the spinning of others. They seated themselves and commenced a conversation which turned finally upon the Albany bridge, on which one of the twain volunteered to instruct the other.

"But," said the latter, "they don't mean to bwidge the wivah?"

"Yes, bwild a bwidge ovah the wivah."

"Is it paws'ble?" exclaimed the astonished youth; "I thawt they meant to bwild the bwidge on the othah side. I nevah thought the people of Twoy object. 'Taint fair; their ought to bwild it on 'th othah side."

Here the whistle blew, just in time to save the feelings of the youth whose auditory were expioding with laughter.—*Buffalo Express.*

A SMART MILKMAID.

The worshipful Sir Digby Somerville did keep a bountiful house full ever of brave company, at his seat in Suffolk. At one time among his guests did happen a young gentleman from the Court, whose apparel was more garnished with lacings and gold than his brain with modesty or wit. One time going into the fields with his host, they did espy a comely milk maiden with her pail.

"Prythee, Phillis," quoth the courtier, leering the while at the girl, "an I give thee a kiss, wilt thou give me a draught of thy ware?"

"In the meadow," quoth she, "thou wilt find one ready to give thee milk, and glad of thy kiss, for she is of thy kin."

The court gallant looked in the mead, and espied a she-ass.

"So sharp, fair rustic," quoth he, angrily, "thou lookest as if thou couldest barely say boo to a goose."

"Yea, that I can, and to a gander also."

Whereat she cried out lustily, "Boo!"

The young man hastened away, and the worshipful Sir Digby did laugh heartily, and entertain his guests with the tale.—*Book of Merrie Jestes*, 1609.

THE POP GUN PLANT.

In the mountains of Brazil there grows a set of very beautiful plants called Rhopalas; they are covered with velvet, especially on the young leaves, which are brown. There is a bunchy plant, Pilea callitrichoides, of tender, brittle and juicy aspect, which looks as if it would be good to eat in a cooling salad, but which is really of so explosive a temperament that it might fairly be call the pistol plant. When near flowering, and with its tiny buds ready to open, if the plant is either dipped in water or abundantly watered, each bud will explode successively, keeping up a mimic Sebastopolitan bombardment, sending forth a puff of gunpowder smoke —or a little cloud of dusty pollen—as its stamens suddenly start forth to take their place and form a cross. It is an amusing toy, which produces a plentiful crop of pop guns.—*Sat. Gazette.*

Jester's Picnic.

A fortune-teller was arrested at the theatre of Gesticulation in Paris, and carried before the Tribune of Correctional Police.

"You know how to read fortunes?" said the president, a man of great wit but too fond of a joke for a magistrate.

"I do, M. le President," replied the seer.

"In this case," said the judge, "you know the judgment we intend to pronounce?"

"Certainly I do."

"Well, what will happen to you?"

"Nothing."

"Are you sure of it?"

"You will acquit me."

"Acquit you?"

"There is no doubt of it. Because sir, if it had been your intention to condemn me, you would not have added irons to misfortune."

The president disconcerted, turned to his brother judges and the sorcerer was acquitted.

A young gentleman residing in the neighborhood of Richmond had occasion, a short time since, to drive his pretty cousin Fanny down to Windsor (very little Charlie a brother of Fanny's, accompanied and sat between them in the gig: but as he was only five or six years of age, was considered nobody. Unfortunately, however, the urchin had got a new hat that very day, of which he was exceedingly proud. Finding on his arrival at Windsor, that it had sustained some injury during the journey, he rushed to his mamma to complain.

"I declare, mamma," he cried, "I'll never ride in a gig between sister Fanny and cousin George again."

"Why so, my dear?" inquired mamma.

"Because," he replied, "then we brushed my new hat all to pieces, with leaning over me to kiss each other all the way from Richmond."

"Tommy, my son, what are you going to do with that club?"

"Send it to the editor of course."

"But what are you going to send it to the editor for?"

"'Cause he says if anybody will send him a club he will send them a copy of his pa-a-per."

The mother came pretty near fainting, but retained consciousness enough to ask:

"But Tommy dear, what do you suppose he wants of a club?"

"Well, I don't know," replied the hopeful urchin, "unless it is to knock down subscribers as don't pay for their paper!"

During the late war with Great Britain an American officer, who carried a flag over to the British lines after having dropt dead the bad news of his mission, was invited by the commanding British officer to dine. As usual on such occasions, the wine was circulated and a British officer being called upon for a toast, gave, "Mr Madison, dead or alive," which the American drank without appearing to give it particular notice. When it came to the American's turn to give a toast he gave "The Prince Regent, drunk or sober." "Sir," said the British officer, bridling up and coloring with anger, "that is an insult." "No, sir," answered the American, very coolly, "it is only a reply to one."

"How do you know he's a bachelor, aunt?" I naturally inquired.

"Common-sense, my dear," replied Aunt Deborah, contentiously. "I judge of people by their belongings; no lady could get into that coal cart without calling her dress against the wheel; and if he had a wife she handsome bay horse would go with another by her carriage behind of her. Besides he wouldn't be so fond of his pipe if he had anything else to care for; and, above all, Kate added my aunt conclusively, "his silk handkerchief wasn't hemmed, and he'd a button wanting in front of his shirt."—*Fraser.*

The "stunning electioneering articles" which are appearing now-a-days, contain some good and odious specimens of ridiculously fine writing. For instance, a writer in the New York Express, from Boston, who is intense for Fillmore, says: "A few weeks ago it was my fortune—or rather misfortune—to be in the agent line, of selling books, papers, and lithographs of 'Buck,' and 'Old Free not. How many do you think I sold in the three weeks I was in business? The almighty number of one! One I sold to a drunken man, and the other to a man who said I looked so miserable he would take it out of pity. I quit the business directly."

One day, at dinner, the Rev Sydney Smith was dining at Highgate, where he met with the rector of Hornsby, who was very learned, very rich, and very religious. The rector, like a good man as he was, relieved severely on the improvidence of the poor and also on their increasing number, which he considered a great evil. He wound up his diatribe by saying: "That the great evil of the day was the *surplus* population."

"I quite agree with you" retorted the profane Smith: "the *surplice* population is becoming a great evil."

An extensive and wealthy lumberman in a neighboring county is the father of a hard case of a boy. Being desirous of reforming him, he offered as an inducement, to give the proceeds of the lumber from two thousand hemlock logs, provided he would go to school and behave himself for one year. The hopeful remained silent for some time after listening to the proposal for. Finally, in answer to his father's interrogation, "What do you say, my son?" he replied, "Call it pine logs dad, and I'll go it."

A parster, asked by a musician, whether he was not a lover of *harmony*, replied, "Yes, but I pr-fer it when it is abridged, for then it is money! and that, my f-lend, is the better half of it. I have no objection to your notes, but I like those of the Bank of England much better; you may make good music but those make infinitely the best of tunes." "How so? that bank notes are good things I allow; but pray what tune will they make?" "The best tune in the world—a *for-tune*."

A very prosy actor was playing Macbeth before a village audience. In the fifth act occurs the beautiful soliloquy commencing:

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow"

He was exceedingly slow over these words and he had hardly spoken the last word when his progress was interrupted by a voice from the gallery:

"Dang it, mon, get to the end of the week at once, and ha' done with it."

Dr. Barnes, who is now about ninety five years of age, being sometimes (as even younger men might be) inclined to sleep a little during sermons, a fri- d who was with him in his pew one Sunday lately, having joked with him on his having nodded now and then, Barnes insisted he had been awake all the time.

"Well, then," said his friend, "can you tell me what the sermon was about?"

"Yes, I can," he answered, "it was about a half hour too long."

Colonel Hirvs, a tried and gallant officer, never went into action without manifest emotion, and on one occasion, when leading his regiment under fire, a raw subaltern, who noticed the agitation under which struck his frame, had the impertinence to remark: "Why, colonel, you're afraid!"

"Yes, sir, and if you were half as much afraid as I am, you would run away."

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VOL. XI.

NEW

THE CHILDR

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BY

CHAPTER IV.

PREMONITIONS OF DANG

It was observable that the Unde restless and weary as the parties and when, near night, they entered a lonely and dark than any they h during the day, his anxiety visibl Leaving the place which he had kep cus Foote the greater part of the un close to Judith, nor would he leave t ment. As the sun declined to his pl and the dimness of twilight crept found depths of the forest, Billy se out of his apathy, and call in such o ing senses as were capable of bei action; and they appeared mostly sight and hearing. Sounds that e cars startled his. Objects that clud of the keenest hunter had strange p his. He glanced from point to point pass with the utmost eagerness, or, head until his face touched his horse tened with absorbing intensity of pur

Waldron, who had been watchin ments for the last hour, shook his he and remarked to Neverfail, in a low

"The boy's nervousness, I fear, good. He has a wonderful faculty detecting the proximity of Indians. you will recollect, he was similar though not to such a notable extent.

Notwithstanding Waldron spoke i ed voice, the lad turned partially in and holding up his finger emitted sound so strikingly significant, so fu ing, that Neverfail and Lockwood grasped their rifles and looked about

"I could wish," added Waldron were well out of this sombre forest— est, it seems to me, that I ever saw not near a spot where we can with p camp for the night?"

Neverfail, to whom this interrogat dressed, was not in haste to answer. a little, like a prudent man; swept th ners of the silent wilderness with his laid his rifle in an easier position ac arm, and slowly replied:

"In less than a mile from here is a I've been cal-ulatin' to camp. As y gov'ner,his is a dark lookin' strip of ti ally fitted for an ambush and things c This has been a famous battle grou redskins. The Chickasaws, Cherc Maumies have had more than one dea that very vile w're travelin' over scarcely a foot of land hereabouts, been stained with heathen blood, o another. It's a piece of arth that is ahvate safe for folks with white compl we was twenty miles from here, I care. And then there's a woman-kind and that sort are a leetle apt to be embarrass the fightin' men that have do to load and fire and make a sure agen the cannin' pagans, but that di ap'pear is torn with 'em and they ra You fear there's danger, and so there be long afore there wont be danger in ry place."

"The intense silence, with the dim twilight falling through the branches across our devious way, is indeed calcu mpress the soul with an awe approac If my poor gal was at some peaceful from hence, I should not feel this load lon weighing heavily upon my mind," dron, despondingly, still observing the ness and vigilance of Billy.

"The strange conduct of that boy ha a damp upon your spirits, gov'ner."

Neverfail stopped and the whole part like a statue. He cast his eyes about as for some land-mark with which he was

"Lockwood," he said, addressing t er, "if you'll remain here and keep a st over the party, I'll go ahead and see way is clear."

The Forester dismounted, and expos